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The people's right defended













THE  
PEOPLE'S RIGHT DEFENDED:  
BEING  
AN EXAMINATION  
OF THE  
ROMISH PRINCIPLE  
OF  
WITHHOLDING THE SCRIPTURES  
FROM THE LAITY.

TOGETHER WITH A DISCUSSION OF SOME OTHER  
POINTS IN THE ROMISH CONTROVERSY.

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BY "WICKLIFFE."

*By S. B. Winchester*  
"Search the Scriptures."—John v. 39.

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TO WHICH IS APPENDED  
A DISCOURSE ON TRANSUBSTANTIATION.  
BY THE RT. REV. JOHN TILLOTSON, D.D.  
LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

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*Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:*

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the seventeenth day of December, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1830, WILLIAM F. GEDDES, of the said district, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

“The People’s Right Defended, being an examination of the Romish principle of withholding the Scriptures from the Laity; together with a discussion of some other points in the Romish controversy, by ‘WICKLIFFE.’ ‘Search the Scriptures.’ John v. 39. To which is appended a Discourse on Transubstantiation, by the Right Rev. John Tillotson, D. D., Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, intituled, “An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned.” And also to the Act, entitled, “An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled ‘An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned,’ and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching, historical and other prints.”

D. CALDWELL,  
*Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.*

## PREFACE.

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THE substance of this little volume was prepared without the most distant intention of presenting it to the public in its present form. It was originally published, a few months since, in numbers over the signature of "G." in the "Southern Religious Telegraph," published at Richmond, Va.


Solicitations from several sources have again brought these numbers before the public, revised and somewhat enlarged, to which is now added the "*Introduction*," and Tillotson's Sermon on Transubstantiation.

If this volume should be the humble means, under God, of inducing any under the influence of Romanism, to assert, and firmly to maintain, with a proper Christian spirit, their unalienable right to read and study for themselves the sacred scriptures; or of preventing any from increasing the hazard of their salvation in any way, the object and prayers of the Author will be fully answered.

As an humble pioneer, and as an unworthy servant to the Bible, in those sections of our country where the people's right to read and search the scriptures, is neither wholly understood nor fully enjoyed, this little volume IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THE "AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY," by

THE AUTHOR.

*Philadelphia, Dec. 17th, 1830.*

 Some of the authorities referred to in the following pages, are given as quoted by Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, Barrow, and others, whose learning and veracity stand unimpeached.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE importance of an acquaintance with the Romish Controversy is now beginning to be more justly estimated among those who are set for the defence of the truth, than it has been for a long time. When we look at the late movements of the "Holy See" in reference to our beloved country; when we remember that the Tyrants of Europe, viewing Papacy as the most successful instrument that could be employed to crush the liberties and ensure the downfall of this happy people, would eagerly aid in the propagation of Popish principles throughout our land; when we look at the vigorous and systematic exertions now making by that church, from Maine to Florida, and from the Atlantic to the farthest western settlement; and when, in connection with this, we look at the state of society and the condition of the people in those countries where this church is established, or has a superior influence; the importance of a correct and intimate acquaintance with Romish principles and Popish policy, rises in magnitude equalled only by the preciousness of civil and religious liberty, and the salvation of immortal souls. I could not present this subject in a more striking light than by quoting the following extract from a review of Blanco White's Letters on Catholicism, by the Rev. ASHBEL GREEN, D.D. LL.D. in his able "*Advocate*" for November, 1826:

"For more than a century past, (says Dr. Green,) the controversy between Papists and Protestants has been

but little agitated—little, in comparison with what had taken place in the two preceding centuries. The cause of this cessation of arguing on the points litigated so ardently by the Protestant reformers and their opponents, is not obscure—Argument on both sides had been exhausted, and proselytes, in any considerable numbers, could no longer be made. The habits of education had generally fixed both Protestants and Papists in the faith of their fathers; and the influence of both was so bounded, not only by moral causes, but also by the character, and establishments, and enactments of states and kingdoms, that any such changes as were witnessed in the time of Luther, and Calvin, and Cranmer, and Knox, were no longer to be expected.

“Within a few years, however, the great and interesting changes which have had such a mighty influence on the political state of the civilized world, and which have materially altered the whole aspect of society in a great part of Europe and America, have already given some animation, and are likely, ere long, to give much more to the long dormant controversy. Popery has received a rude shock both in the old world and the new; and it is now mustering all its force, and putting forth all its energies, and all its artifice, to recover the ground it has lost; and it is so favoured and fostered by secular power in Europe, as to assume an appearance truly formidable. The present occupant of the papal throne, with talents superior to many of his predecessors, seems to possess a full share of their spirit and zeal. He has renewed the order of the Jesuits, denounced Bible societies, encouraged and patronized a most splendid jubilee, with all its mummery of pardons and indulgences, exerted all his influence to stimulate the exertions of his agents even in Protestant states, and has already sent a pretty large sum of money to the United

States, to support missionaries and to aid popish institutions.

“In these circumstances, it certainly behooves Protestants to look warily about them; to observe attentively the posture and manœuvres of their adversaries; to see that their arms of defence are in good order; and to be in all respects prepared for a new conflict. That conflict, we do verily believe, is at hand. To speak without a figure, we are fully persuaded that the Popish controversy must, and will be speedily renewed, not only in Europe, but in our own country; and that our young Theologians will need to study no subject of controversy more carefully than this, and our churches and people to be warned of no danger, more than that to which they will be exposed from popish artifice and seduction.

“It is our happiness to live in a land which admits of no religious establishment, nor of any persecution, of a civil kind, for conscience sake. In this we do most unfeignedly rejoice. If by a wish we could impose civil disabilities, or restrictions of any kind, on the Roman Catholics, or on any other sect, that wish should not be formed. We believe it to be as contrary to the spirit of true Christianity as to the civil liberty which is the glory of our land, that any form of religious faith should be more favored than another by secular authority.—Truth has the best chance for a triumph, when she is left to the exercise of her own weapons—reason, argument, and experience. In our humble judgment, the Roman Catholic Religion would drop all its frowning aspect on the peace of society in Britain, if there were no established church in that country. The author of the work before us, does indeed assert it to be an “indubitable fact, that *sincere* Roman Catholics cannot con-



scientiously be *tolerant*;" and it therefore might be argued, that we ought to guard by law, against their obtaining an ascendancy in the United States; lest, in that event, they should destroy the religious freedom which we so highly prize. But we have really no apprehensions on this subject. Suppose it to be as Mr. White asserts, (and we cannot refuse to admit that he is better acquainted with the genuine spirit of Popery than we are,) still we are satisfied, that any attempt to impose civil restrictions on the Roman Catholics, would do infinitely more harm than good. It would indicate that Protestants were afraid to trust their cause to the influence of truth alone. For ourselves, we have no such fear.—Give us a fair field of argument, and we ask for nothing more; and with this, we are confident that our country has nothing to dread.

But while we are opposed to all persecution, we are equally opposed to indifference and a misnamed charity, in relation to this important matter. We question not that there have been, and now are, many individuals of real piety in the Roman Catholic communion; and yet we conscientiously believe that Popery is the "Man of sin," of the New Testament. Taken as a system, it is corrupt in the extreme, and dangerous to the souls of men, beyond what can easily be described. It is therefore not to be expected that those who thus regard it, should not do every thing which they lawfully may, to prevent its prevalence and to unmask its delusions. We are bound to this by every principle and every consideration, which should have influence with us as friends to "the truth as it is in Jesus." We are not to be told that this is bigotry and narrow-mindedness; and that all Christian sects would better take care of themselves and let their neighbours alone. Will the Romanists

do this? No—they will “compass sea and land to make one proselyte.” And truly they cannot consistently act otherwise, while they believe, as they do, that there is no salvation out of the pale of their church. Self defence, therefore, demands from Protestants the counteraction of the efforts of Popery, and the exposure of its arts and its abominations; and still more imperiously is it demanded by a regard to the everlasting well-being of their fellow men. He is unworthy of the name of a Christian who can witness attempts to propagate sentiments which he sincerely believes, are calculated to lead men to perdition, and not resist such attempts, and make every exertion in his power, to prevent the adoption of such sentiments. It should indeed be always recollected that genuine christian zeal is entirely a different thing from acrimony, reviling, and slander; and that a good cause will not gain, but lose, whenever anger, or ill temper, or exaggeration is substituted in pleading it, for facts and arguments. We are not to hate those whom we believe to be erroneous. But it is perfectly consistent with wishing them well, nay, it is a part of benevolence itself, if rightly understood, to expose their errors, and to prevent to the utmost the mischief which they seek to effect. This therefore, according to our ability, we are determined to do *fearlessly*, and yet we trust charitably.—We say charitably, for true charity requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves; and we cannot do so, if, as we have said, we do not endeavour to save him from ruinous error; we cannot even love the propagators of error as we ought to love them, if we neglect when we have opportunity, to show them distinctly wherein they are wrong—wherein they are acting injuriously both to themselves and to others.”

With regard to the exposure of Popish errors and su-

perstitutions, though it is clearly the duty of those who are the guardians of the truth and the purity of the church, to make this exposure on all suitable occasions, yet there exists in the minds of Protestants, of the present day, a strange and unaccountable squeamishness on this subject. Illiberality of the blackest kind, and a want of charity wholly unpardonable, is by *Protestants*, attributed to that preacher or writer who attempts to exhibit to the world the corruptions and abominations of the Romish church; you may write and preach as much against the corruption of all other denominations, as you please, and even those whose creed, or church order you attack will be disposed to let you pass without censure; but say a word against the Church of Rome, and you are at once stigmatized as illiberal and sectarian. Yes, Roman Catholics may write and preach what they please against Protestants of all denominations, they may denounce us all as worthy of hell, (purgatory being too good for such arch heretics;) they may anathematise us from Sabbath to Sabbath as they actually do, and declare salvation impossible for any of us—and it all displays, no want of charity, no illiberality in them! Such sickly, spurious liberality as this, should find no place among those who believe the church of Rome to be the “mother of Harlots,” and the Pope, the “man of sin.” Let the person and property of every Papist, be as sacred as ours, but let his religious creed and principles be subject to the same investigation, and the same scrutiny: let them be secured in the full enjoyment of every privilege both civil and religious, but let those who differ from them in religious opinions be permitted, without censure and the charge of illiberality, to expose those errors in the doctrine and practice of the Romish church, which affect so seriously the privileges of the people and abridge so danger-



ously the right of conscience. We ask no more from fellow Protestants, than what we freely grant to all, both Protestants and Papists, viz. the right of entertaining and freely expressing our opinions on their creed, without incurring, in its legitimate exercise, the charge of illiberality or sectarian feeling. We complain not of the numerous periodicals conducted by Papists for the avowed object of exposing and condemning the heresy of all who reject their creed. We seek no cover for the truth as we hold it; we shrink from no investigation of the creed which we profess; and we call no man illiberal or uncharitable who subjects our religious creed and principles to the severest scrutiny and to the closest examination; and surely it is ungenerous in Papists, and no less partial and strangely inconsistent in Protestants, to raise the cry of persecution against those, who subject the Romish creed and principles to the same scrutiny and examination.

There is a very popular consideration urged with great earnestness by Papists on the minds of those who are "halting between two opinions"—whether to become a Papist—or remain a Protestant. It is this: that in as much as Protestants admit the possibility of salvation in the Romish Church, and as Papists utterly deny the existence of such a possibility out of it, it is the safest to be a Romanist; and on this ground some have abandoned the religion by which their fathers were conducted to heaven, and have connected themselves with the Church of Rome. "According to this principle," observes the learned Archbishop Tillotson, writing on this very subject, "it is always safest to be on the *uncharitable side*; and yet *uncharitableness* is as bad an evidence, either of a true christian, or a true church, as a man would wish."\* This popular argument so indus-

\* Archb. Tillotson's Work, vol. I. p. 126.

triously used by Papists, may be thus stated in its strongest light: both Protestants and Papists unite in admitting that those in communion with the Romish Church may be saved, but only Protestants admit that those in communion with their churches may be saved, therefore it is safest to belong to that church in which all parties agree that there is salvation. I cannot give a better answer to this argument than that already given by Archbishop Tillotson above quoted. "For answer to this," says the learned Archbishop, "I shall endeavour to shew, that this is so far from being a *good argument* that it is so intolerably *weak* and *sophistical* that any considerate man ought to be ashamed to be caught by it. For either it is good of itself and sufficient to persuade a man to relinquish our Church, and to pass over to theirs, without entering into the merits of the cause on either side, and without comparing the Doctrines and Practices of both the Churches together, or it is not. If it be not sufficient *of itself* to persuade a man to leave our Church, without comparing the Doctrines on both sides, then it is to no purpose, and there is nothing got by it. For if upon examination and comparing of Doctrines the one appear to be *true* and the other *false*, this alone is a sufficient inducement to any man to cleave to that Church where the true Doctrine is found; and then there is no need of this argument.

"If it be said that this argument is good in itself without the examination of the Doctrines of both Churches; this seems a very strange thing for any man to affirm, *That it is reason enough to a man to be of any Church, whatever her Doctrines and Practices be, if she do but damn those that differ from her, and if the Church that differs from her do but allow a possibility of salvation in her Communion.*

"But as they who use this argument pretend that it

is sufficient of itself, I shall shew the weakness of the *principle* upon which this *argument* relies; and that is this, *that whatever different parties in religion agree in, is safest to be chosen.* The true consequence of which *principle* if it be driven to the head, is to persuade men to forsake Christianity, and to make them take up in the principles of *natural Religion*, for in these all Religions do agree. For if this *principle* be true, and signify any thing, it is dangerous to embrace any thing wherein the several parties in Religion differ; because that only is safe and prudent to be chosen wherein all agree. So that this *argument*, if the foundation of it be good, will persuade farther than those who make use of it desire it should do; for it will not only make men forsake the *Protestant Religion*, but *Popery* too; and which is much more considerable, *Christianity* itself.

“I will give some *parallel instances* by which it will clearly be seen that this *argument* concludes false. The *Donatists* denied the Baptism of the *Catholics* to be good, but the *Catholics* acknowledged the Baptism of the *Donatists* to be valid. So that both sides were agreed that the Baptism of the *Donatists* was good, therefore the safest way for St. *Austin* and other *Catholics* (according to this *argument*) was to be baptised again by the *Donatists*, because by the acknowledgment of both sides Baptism among them was valid.

“But to come nearer to the Church of *Rome*. Several in that Church hold *the personal Infallibility of the Pope, and the lawfulness of deposing and killing Kings for Heresy* to be *de fide*, that is, necessary Articles of Faith, and consequently, that whoever does not believe them cannot be saved. But a great many *Papists* though they believe these things to be no matters of Faith, yet they think those that hold them may be saved, and they



are generally very favourable towards them. But now, according to this *argument*, they ought all to be of their opinion in these points because both sides are agreed that *they that hold them may be saved*; but one side positively says that *men cannot be saved if they do not hold them*.

“St. *Paul* acknowledged the *possibility* of the *salvation* of those *who built hay and stubble upon the foundation of Christianity*, that *they might be saved*, though with great difficulty, and as it were *out of the fire*. But now among those builders with hay and stubble there were those who denied the possibility of St. *Paul*’s salvation and of those who were of his mind. We are told of some who built the *Jewish Ceremonies* and observances upon the foundation of Christianity, and said that unless men were Circumcised and kept the Law of *Moses* they could not be saved. So that by this argument St. *Paul* and his followers ought to have gone over to those *Judaizing Christians*, because it was acknowledged on both sides that they might be saved. But these *Judaizing Christians* were as uncharitable to St. *Paul* and other Christians, as the Church of *Rome* is now to us, for they said positively *that they could not be saved*. But can any man think that St. *Paul* would have been moved by this argument, to leave a safe and certain way of salvation for that which was only possible, and that with great difficulty and hazard? The argument you see is the very same, and yet it concludes the wrong way; which plainly shews that it is a *contingent argument*, and concludes uncertainly and by chance, and therefore no man ought to be moved by it.

“If this *argument* were good, then by this trick a man may bring over all the world to agree with him in an error which another does not account damnable, what-

ever it be, provided he do but damn all those that do not hold it; and there wants nothing but *confidence* and *uncharitableness* to do this. But is there any sense, that another man's boldness and want of charity should be an argument to move me to be of his opinion? I cannot illustrate this better, than by the difference between a skilful Physician and a Mountebank. A *learned* and a *skilful Physician* is modest, and speaks *justly* of things: he says, that such a method of cure which he has directed is safe; and withal, that that which the *Mountebank* prescribes may possibly do the work, but there is great hazard and danger in it; but the *Mountebank*, who never talks of any think less than *Infallible cures*, (and always the more *Mountebank* the stronger pretence to *Infallibility*) he is positive that that method which the *Physician* prescribes will destroy the patient, but his receipt is infallible and never fails. Is there any reason in this case, that this man shall carry it merely by his *confidence*? And yet if this *argument* be good, the safest way is to reject the *Physician's* advice and to stick to the *Mountebank's*. For both sides are agreed, that there is a possibility of cure in the *Mountebank's* method, but not in the *Physician's*; and so the whole force of the argument lies in the *confidence* of an *ignorant man*.

“Again, this *argument* is very unfit to work upon *those* to whom it is propounded: For either they believe we say true in this, or not. If they think we do not, they have no reason to be moved by what we say. If they think we do, why do they not take in all that we say in this matter? Namely, that though it be possible for some in the Communion of the *Roman Church* to be saved, yet it is very hazardous; and that they are in a safe condition already in our Church. And why then

should a *bare possibility*, accompanied with infinite and apparent hazard, be an argument to any man to run into that danger?

“Lastly, this *argument* is very improper to be urged by those who make use of it. Half of the strength of it lies in this, that we *Protestants* acknowledge that *it is possible a Papist may be saved*. But why should they lay any stress upon this? What matter is it what we Heretics say, who are so damnably mistaken in all other things? Methinks if there were no other reason, yet because we say it, it should seem to them to be unlikely to be true. But I perceive when it serves for their purpose we have some little credit and authority among them.”\*

It is undoubtedly every man’s duty, who has ability and capacity for it, to endeavour to understand the grounds of his religion, for the better any man understands the grounds and reasons of those doctrines which he professes to believe, the more firmly will he be established in the truth; the more resolute will he be in the day of trial; and the better able to withstand the arts and assaults of cunning adversaries, and the fierce storms of persecution. And on the contrary, that man will soon be moved from his stedfastness, who never examined the grounds and reasons of his belief: when it comes to the trial, he that has but little to say for his religion, will probably do and suffer as little for it.

“I have often wondered,” says Archbishop Tillotson, “why the People in the Church of *Rome* do not suspect their Teachers and Guides to have some ill design upon them, when they do so industriously debar them of the means of Knowledge, and are so very loth to let them understand what it is that we have to say against their

\*Archb. Tillotson’s Works, vol. 1. p. 125.



Religion. For can any thing in the world be more suspicious, than to persuade men, to put out their eyes, upon promise that they will help them to a much better and more faithful Guide? If any Church, any Profession of Men, be unwilling their Doctrines should be exposed to Trial, it is a certain sign they know something by them that is faulty, and which will not endure the light. This is the account which our Saviour gives us in a like case; it was *because mens deeds were evil that they loved darkness rather than light. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light; neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd: But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.*"\*

\* Archb. Tillotson's Works, vol. 1. p. 233.



## CHAPTER I.

### SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.

The Pope of Rome claims to be the vicar of Christ, the supreme head of his church upon earth, and the successor of Peter. This is a high and important claim, and should, therefore, rest upon the most indubitable foundation. It is a vital and cardinal point in the Papal system, and if supported by truth ought to be acknowledged by the whole world; but if not, it should be abandoned by those who are its advocates. To an examination of the merits of this claim, we shall now direct the reader's attention.

The supremacy of the Pope is argued from his being the successor of Peter. Here two difficulties present themselves, the one is—that there is no good evidence that Peter ever was at Rome. It certainly does not appear from scripture; indeed, there is nothing in scripture which would lead to such a supposition. Paul wrote one Epistle to Rome, and five from Rome, yet he makes no mention of Peter being there, and in his Epistle to the Coll. iv. 11., after naming several, adds “these only are my fellow workers, unto the Kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.” Peter was not at Rome when Paul said “at my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.”\* He was not there just before Paul's death, who writes to Timothy that all the brethren did salute him, and naming many of them he omits Peter.† There is no evidence from scripture that he ever was at Rome; and it is far from being

\* 2 Tim. iv. 16.

† 2 Tim. iv. 21.



probable that he would have visited heathen Rome and have said nothing about it, and have given no account of his labours there; and as the evidence of scripture is negatively against his being there, the burden of proof is upon the shoulders of those who assert the fact. But admitting he was there, still there is no good evidence of his ever having been Bishop of Rome. Here then you will perceive are two points to be *proved*. It is not enough that it be shown he was there, but it must be incontestibly *proved* that he was *Bishop of Rome*.

The only shadow of proof is that from Eusebius, who states that he presided at Rome twenty-five years. But Eusebius professedly gives the whole of his statement on the authority of Irenæus who flourished in the second century.\* It is ultimately from Irenæus that we learn any thing of the early history of the Roman See, and he gives no such statement that Peter was ever Bishop of Rome, or that he handed down his divine prerogative, (whatever that might be) to his successors in that diocese.† On the contrary he tells us that the two apostles, Peter and Paul, jointly founded the church at Rome—and when thus founded they *jointly* delivered the Episcopate of it to Linus. “Fundentes igitur et instruantes beati Apostoli (Petrus et Paulus) Ecclesiam (Romanam,) Lino episcopatum administrandæ ecclesiæ tradiderunt. Succedit autem ei Anacletus, etc.”‡ Peter and Paul are certainly represented here as both and equally engaged in the performance of certain acts, viz: founding a church and delivering the episcopate of it to another, and if so, they did it *jointly*. The word *jointly*, therefore, as used in the free translation given above, does not refer to the manner in which the authority passed from them to Linus; but to the manner in which the

\* See Eusb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. 2, 4. lib. v. c. 5, 6.

† See Fab. Diff. Rom. p. 258. ‡ Iren, adv. Haer lib, iii c. 3.

Apostles acted in delivering that authority; namely, they did not deliver it *singly* but *jointly*, for surely the conjunction which connects Paul with Peter in the performance of this work, is a copulative, and expresses a joint action. Faber says that with respect to either of the two co-founders ever having been Bishop of Rome, Irenæus is totally silent: And he understands Irenæus as saying that these Apostles acted in this matter in virtue of their *joint* authority.

It is worthy of note, says Faber, that, in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the person who appointed Linus the first bishop of Rome, is said to have been St. PAUL. Constit. Apost. lib. vii. c. 46. This statement, though it *varies* from the more full account given by Irenæus, yet does not absolutely *contradict* it. For, if Linus were appointed the first bishop of Rome by PAUL and PETER, he was doubtless so appointed by the authority of PAUL; though PAUL, in transacting the business, did not act *singly* but *jointly*. Yet the circumstance is remarkable: for since the name of PETER could be *wholly omitted* in an account of the foundation of the Roman church, and since the consecration of Linus could have been *nakedly* ascribed to *another person*; such a circumstance clearly shews, how little stress could have been laid in the early ages upon the imagined primacy of PETER and his alleged Roman successors. On the supposition, that *the Roman church was jointly founded by PETER and PAUL*, and on the additional supposition, that *the sentiments of the early ages respecting the primacy of PETER corresponded with the sentiments of modern Latins*, it is evident, that, in common parlance, though Linus would often be said to have been *simply* appointed by PETER, he would never be said to have been *simply* appointed by PAUL. The language of the

*Apostolic Constitutions* would never, I apprehend, be adopted by a zealous Latin of the present day.\*

What Irenæus says is admitted, that Paul and Peter founded the Church of Rome and delivered the episcopate of it to Linus. If so, then Linus can not be said to succeed Peter, for if Peter assisted Paul or took any part in delivering the episcopate to Linus, he was not yet dead, and consequently Linus must have been made Bishop by Peter. Now if Peter was Bishop of Rome at this time, there must have been two Bishops at the same time.

If Peter consecrated Linus, Bishop of Rome, Peter did not die Bishop of Rome, or there were two Bishops of Rome; and if Peter did not die Bishop of Rome then Linus was not his successor in the same sense in which Anacletus was the successor of Linus, which at once destroys the whole Papal cause. Again, if Peter did not die Bishop of Rome, he must have been, before his death, a suffragan of Linus; that is, the inspired Apostle Peter, the vicar of Christ, the chief of the Apostles, the rock on which the Church is built, was the suffragan of an uninspired Bishop of Rome! Such a supposition is equally destructive to the Papal cause. Is it said that Peter having resigned the office for a time, resumed it again before his death? If so, did he hold the office jointly with him who was inducted at his resignation? Then there were two Bishops of Rome at the same time; or did he depose the Bishop in office when he resumed it? Then he was the successor to that Bishop in the same sense in which that Bishop was his successor; but this in Bellarmine's opinion was plainly intolerable.† One of four things, therefore, is true, either Peter never was Bishop

\* See Fab. Diff. Rom. p. 259—note.

† Petrum Apostolum successisse in Episcopatu Antiocheno aliqui ex discipulis, quod est plane intolerandum. Bell. lib. ii. 6.

of Rome, which is far the most probable of all, or he and Linus were Bishops of Rome at the same time, which, it is admitted, would be contrary to all church order; or he resigned his office at the consecration of Linus, and therefore did not die Bishop of Rome; or he resumed it again after such resignation, and then either governed jointly with the Bishop then in office or deposed him—any one of which suppositions is equally fatal to the claim of the Pope of Rome.

Faber also offers this argument—“If then the *first* Bishop of each apostolic church was the person, to whom in the first instance the apostolic founder of that church committed the episcopate of it; Linus being the person to whom in the *first* instance the two apostolic founders of the Roman Church committed the episcopate of that church, must clearly have been the first Bishop of Rome.”\*

Eusebius is quoted by Romanists as saying that “Linus was the first, after Peter, who obtained the episcopacy of the Roman Church.” But this is not the whole of the sentence. The historian says he had declared this before (*jam antea declaratum est.*)† Now where has Eusebius made this declaration? No where, but in chapter 2 of the same book, viz: “after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, Linus was the first who obtained the episcopacy of the Roman Church.” We are now able to understand what is meant by the expression “after Peter” in the 4th chapter. It means after his martyrdom. But is it logical to infer that because Linus was made Bishop of Rome after the martyrdom of Peter, therefore Peter was Bishop of Rome! Suppose a historian should say that Pope Leo was the first Pope after the death of Napoleon, would it be logical to infer from

\*Faber's Diff. Rom. p. 259.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3, c. 4.



hence that Napoleon was Pope of Rome?—It is no where said that Linus succeeded (succedit) Peter.—Besides Eusebius, in lib. iii, c. 2, writes thus, “Linus vero primum post Petri et Pauli marturium, Romanæ ecclesiæ episcopatum sortitus est.” Now the idea, I think, contained in this sentence is, that Linus was the very first Bishop that Rome ever had: and this is confirmed by the fact that Clemens is repeatedly asserted to be the *third* who obtained the episcopacy of the Roman Church. But Anacletus succeeded Linus, so that if Peter was Bishop of Rome, Clemens was the *fourth* and not the *third*. Irenæus\* says that Clemens obtained the episcopacy the third from the Apostles (ab Apostolis) not from Peter; here he is represented as the third in succession from the Apostles; and were the Apostles Bishops of Rome? It is therefore just as logical to infer that the “Apostles” were Bishops of Rome as that Peter alone was.

The same also is true in regard to the Episcopate of Antioch. It is admitted that Peter was Bishop of Antioch as much as he ever was of Rome; but Eusebius says that *Evodius* was the *first* Bishop of Antioch.† The same is affirmed by other writers, who say that Evodius was first entrusted with the Episcopate of Antioch by the Apostles.‡

If a plain, honest, unprejudiced reader, who had never heard of Peter’s claim to be Bishop of Rome, were required to say which of the Apostles could make out the fairest claim to that Episcopate, there can be no doubt but that he would decide in favour of Paul, for it certainly would be a far less difficult task to make him out the Bishop of Rome than Peter.

The other difficulty is, that even admitting Peter was Bishop of Rome, it does not follow that he was superior

\* Lib. iii. c. 3.

† Ecc. His. iii. 22.

‡ See Barrow’s Works, vol. I, p. 605, and his authorities.

to other Bishops; this is yet to be *proved*. Romanists in endeavouring to substantiate the Pope's claim to supremacy, generally waste all their time and strength in labouring to prove the supremacy of Peter, and keep as far off the other difficulty as possible, and artfully endeavour to direct all the attention of their readers to this last mentioned point. But I call upon the abettors of this claim to establish the fact that Peter was Bishop of Rome; they assert the fact, and the very idea of the Pope's supremacy is an idle tale unless this be a fact. I will not be satisfied, therefore, with mere probability and plausible conjecture. I demand (what I have a right to demand, since, as a Protestant, I am anathematized for not believing it,) *historical demonstration*. Let us have such evidence as would convince any rational mind without the aid of ghostly authority and ecclesiastical menaces.

But let us examine the pretended supremacy of Peter, and here we would observe that Peter never claimed ~~supremacy~~ premacy for himself. In his Epistles he styles himself merely an *apostle*, not a *Pope*, an *archbishop*, &c. In one place he calls himself an *Elder*; "I exhort you," says he, "who am also an elder."

And if Peter ever had been made superior in office to the other Apostles, would not the time when he was invested with that authority, and the manner and circumstances of his instalment have been mentioned? But Luke, who tells he "had a perfect understanding of *all things from the very first*," and who undertook to write in order, those things which were most surely believed, makes not the slightest mention of these things.

Our Lord, so far from creating any superiority of one Apostle above the rest, discountenances the very desire for such a pre-eminence. When James, and John his beloved disciple, applied to be thus distinguished with

pre-eminence, he rejected their application and declared them incapable of such a preferment.

On another occasion we find the Apostles disputing among themselves who should be the greatest, and applying to our Lord to settle the question; here are two things to be noticed: 1st, Christ discountenanced all idea of the superiority of one over the rest, by setting a little child in their midst and declaring that whosoever humbled himself as that little child, the same was the greatest. Humility was here set in contrast to the arrogance of such a claim to superiority as is now made for Peter. 2d. The next thing to be observed is, that the Apostles must have been very ignorant of Peter's supremacy if it really existed, since they disputed among themselves to whom a supremacy belonged. Why did not Peter assert his claim and end the dispute by referring to his instalment as supreme Apostle? If the supremacy of Peter was so soon lost as to become a matter of dispute among the Apostles, no wonder it has never been found since; and if Christ, upon application made by the Apostles, refused to assert and sanction Peter's supremacy and thus decide the question that divided the Apostles, it is great presumption in any church to make that decision.

Peter's supremacy can not be argued from those words of Christ, "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven," for in John xx, 23, he says the same to all the apostles.

This authority to bind and loose is derived from the gift of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. But Origin says, "are the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven given by the Lord to Peter alone, and shall none other of the blessed ones receive them? But if this, 'I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, be common,' how also are not all the things common, which were

spoken before, or are added as spoken to Peter.”\* To the same point is the opinion of Theophylact, who says “although it be spoken to *Peter* alone, ‘I will give thee,’ yet it is given to all the Apostles.”† It was the opinion of several of the fathers that this and similar expressions were made to Peter as the representative of the rest of the Apostles and of the church.‡

As to the injunction, “feed my sheep,” as addressed to Peter: the thrice repetition of it by our Lord, with the enquiry if he loved him, was to remind him of his thrice denial of his Lord. But the injunction itself, though made to Peter personally, was yet an injunction to all Pastors. “When it is said to Peter,” says Augustine, “it is said to all, feed my sheep.”§ “Which sheep,” says Ambrose, “and which flock, *not only* then did St. Peter receive, but also with him all we Priests did receive it.”||

Paul acknowledges no supremacy in Peter, for he calls himself not a whit behind the chiefest apostle. In his Epistle to the Galatians, he devotes nearly two whole chapters to the sole purpose of showing that he was equal with Peter in the dignity of the apostleship; and when he went to Peter he professed no subjection, and Peter required no submission, but gave him the right hand of fellowship; and it will be recollected that when Peter acted with some degree of duplicity at Antioch, Paul rebuked him to his face, and Peter stood corrected by the proof.

Some have argued the supremacy of Peter from the fact that he is named first in the catalogue of the Apostles and in the narrations concerning him and them. But this is not always the case. In Gall. ii. 9, James

\* Origin in Math. 16, p. 275.

† Theoph. in loco.

‡ See Barrow's Works, vol. I, p. 585.

§ Aug. de Agone Christ. 30.

|| Ambr. de Sacerd. 2.



is first mentioned, then Cephas or Peter afterwards. In 1st Cor. iii. 22, Paul is first mentioned and Cephas third. In 1st Cor. ix. 5, the Apostles and brethren are mentioned before Cephas. In John i. 44, Andrew is mentioned before Peter. So that the argument drawn from this source proves nothing, and can only operate on the minds of those who are not permitted to examine the scriptures for themselves.

The great text on which this supremacy is founded is the one in Matt. xvi, 18—"Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church." Let us give this text a critical examination, which in substance is taken from the "Scotch Protestant." Peter is sometimes called *Cephas* which is a Syrian word, and sometimes as in this text, *Petros* which is a Greek word, both meaning a *Stone*. There is a difference between *Petros* and *Petra*, they are different words, and of a different gender. The former means a *moveable stone*, which was a very appropriate name for an apostle who denied his master three times, who at one time cut off the ear of the high priest's servant and was ready to fight for his master, and at another time undertook to reprove him to his face, and who acted with duplicity at Antioch, eating with the Gentiles until certain came down from James, when he secretly withdrew. The latter word *Petra* means an *immoveable rock*, this may have referred to Christ himself, and surely it was an appropriate name for him in whom there is no variableness. We contend that it was on Him that the church should be built, and that consequently, the gates of hell should not prevail against it. The article *te*, connected with *Petra*, points out a particular thing as already known. The verse, therefore, should read thus, "I say unto thee, thou art (*Petros*) a Stone, (*kai*) but (*taute te Petra*) upon this, the rock (pointing to himself) I will build my church. For why

does Christ call Peter, *Petros*, and yet say that upon this *te Petra*, he will build his church? The article *te* designates the rock already known as Christ. In the old Testament we read of “the *rock* that begat thee,” “the *rock* of ages,” “the *rock* of my salvation,” “the *rock* of my refuge,” “my *rock* and my *redeemer*,” and Paul tells us that the Israelites drank of that spiritual *rock* and that rock was Christ. This refers to Moses striking the *rock*, spoken of in Numbers xx, 11, where in the septuagint the same word (*Petran*) is used. The Fathers in their translations of this text, are very far from making Christ say he would build his church upon Peter.

Chrysostom on this text says, “Upon the faith of confession (viz. that Christ was the son of the living God) he said he would build his church,” and he further says, “he said he built not upon Peter, for he did not build his church upon a man, but upon the faith of himself.”\*

Abroset citing this text says, “upon this rock, that is upon the confession of the Catholic faith, do I fix, settle or build believers unto salvation.”

Augustine on this text says, “Tu es ergo, inquit, Petrus, et super hanc petram quam confessus es, super hanc petram quam cognovisti dicens, tu es Christus, filius Dei vivi, *ædificabo te, non me super te.*”† That is, “therefore, says he, thou art Peter, and upon this rock, which thou has confessed, upon this rock, which thou hast recognized (or acknowledged) saying—thou art Christ the Son of the living God, *I will build thee, not me upon thee.*” Again in his 124th Treatise on John, he says, “upon this rock which thou hast confessed, &c.

\*See Chrysostom in loco.

†In ch. ii Eph. p. 1998. Ed. par. 1569.

‡See Aug. in Matt. Serm. xiii. Tom. x. p. 51. Ed. Bas. 1569.

*The rock was Christ*—upon which foundation even Peter himself was built.”\*

“If,” says Origin, “you think the whole church to be only built on Peter alone, what will you say of John the son of Thunder, and of each of the apostles?† This Father is here certainly writing against the idea that the church is built on Peter more than on the rest of the apostles.

Hierom says, “Christ was the rock, and he bestowed on the apostles, that they should be called rocks,‡ and you say, (says he again) that the church is founded on Peter, but the same in another place is done upon all the apostles.§

When the question about imposing certain ceremonial observances upon the Gentiles came before the first council, the opinion of Peter was not asked; neither did the decree of the council run in Peter’s words, but rather in those of James, who, indeed, seemed to be the most conspicuous and authoritative personage in the whole assembly.

It appears that the apostles at Jerusalem had the authority to *send* Peter from place to place, where the good of the church seemed to require the presence of an apostle. “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they *SENT* unto them Peter and John.||

Have the cardinals at Rome, the authority to send the Pope where the prosperity of their church requires his presence? In this transaction where does the supremacy of Peter appear?

Another thing to be observed is, *they were sent* by the Apostles: now in one place our Saviour asks, “whether

\* See Aug. in loco.

|| Acts viii, 14.

† Orig. in Matt. 16, p. 275.

‡ Hierom in Jovin, 1, 14.

§ Hierom in amos, 9, 12.

is greater he that *sends*, or he *that is sent*?" The answer is an axiom. He that sends is greater than he that is sent.

There is another consideration which carries with it an overpowering weight of probability against Peter being the Pope of Rome. Peter is allowed on all hands to have suffered martyrdom during the persecution under Nero, A. D. 66. Romanists admit this. The apostle John lived about 40 years beyond this period, having, during his banishment to Patmos under Domitian, written his apocalypse. Now the question very naturally forces itself upon the mind, *why* did he not succeed Peter in the Popedom, instead of Linus, or Anacletus, or Clemens? (for the Romanists are not agreed as to who was his immediate successor) would not John have been the most suitable successor? Is it likely that an uninspired man would have been chosen the vicar of Christ in preference to an inspired man? in preference to his own beloved disciple? and that an inspired apostle would thus become the suffragan of an uninspired bishop of Rome?! John in his writings makes no mention of popes—though, according to Romanists, there were popes during his life. Surely he would have noticed so remarkable an event as the death of the first Pope of Rome and the appointment of his successor. In these days such an event produces quite a commotion in the church. One would suppose that John, who was an inspired man, would at least have been consulted as to the proper successor of Peter, and that he would have prescribed rules for the election and consecration of popes. But nothing of this kind appears in his writings. But how does it come that the successors of Peter, who were uninspired men, were permitted to occupy the seat and exercise the functions of the See of Rome, while the inspired apostle John was not even per-



mitted to step his foot in that city? How does it come that Rome would tolerate a Christian Bishopric, while she would scarcely tolerate the existence of an obscure follower of Christ within her walls? If Peter was put to death for being a christian—would his successor be permitted to exercise the office of a pope in the christian church in the very midst of heathen? We call upon Romanists to clear up these difficulties.

But, admitting that Peter was Bishop of Rome and that he was superior in office to the other apostles, there is yet a difficulty. If it were a settled point in the church that the Bishop of Rome was superior to all other Bishops, how does it come that there was much bitter contention for supremacy between the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople? how does it come that when the ambitious John, Bishop of Constantinople, laid claim to the title of Universal Bishop, (the title which the Pope now assumes) that Gregory the great, Bishop of Rome, in one of his Epistles, says, “It is a most melancholy thing to hear with any patience, that our brother and companion in the Episcopal office should look down with contempt on all others, and be called sole Bishop.” In another place, writing to Eulogius, Bishop of Alexandria, he says, “*None of my predecessors* would ever use this profane word, for if one patriarch be called *universal*, the name of patriarch is taken away from all the rest. But far be it from any christian heart to wish to arrogate to himself, any thing that would in the least degree diminish the honor of his brethren; to consent to *that execrable term* is no other than to destroy the faith.” And again a little further on—“But I confidently assert that whosoever calls himself a *Universal Bishop*, or desires to be so called, in such aggrandizement is the precursor of *antichrist* because he proudly sets up *himself above all others*.”\*

\*See Greg. Magn. Epist. lib. vi. Ep. 30.

Would any man in his senses believe this to be the language of a Pope of Rome, such as *now* occupy the holy chair? does not Gregory explicitly declare that none of his predecessors were universal Bishops—and does he not bitterly complain that any one should be aspiring to such high prerogative? and yet in the face of this, Romanists tell us that the Bishop of Rome has always been a universal and supreme Bishop. If it was a settled point that the Bishop of Rome was the supreme Bishop, what meaning is there in the grant of that supremacy by the Emperor Phocas, to the Bishop of Rome? What adds great force to the testimony of Gregory on this point, is, that he was writing the truth contrary to his own feelings and desires, for he would have been glad enough to make it appear that the Bishop of Rome had always been a supreme Bishop, as we learn from the fact that he assumed it himself as soon as he had the chance; but not living to enjoy it, it descended to his successor, Boniface III, who was made Pope in 606, and in whom the supremacy of the Pope was established by Phocas. But Gregory does not hint at the supremacy of the Roman See; he does not complain that John of Constantinople was usurping rights and dignities which belonged to himself. But he speaks in strong and decided terms against the claim to supremacy by *any* Bishop. Now is it likely that this would have been the strain of Gregory's complaint, if he had been the supreme Bishop himself? would he not, if he had his senses, have endeavored to establish and defend his exclusive claim to supremacy? But instead of this he disclaims it for himself and all his predecessors not excepting St. Peter himself.

But admitting Peter's supremacy and that he was Bishop of Rome, there is yet another thing to be shown, and that is, that the Pope of Rome is the *successor* to

Peter. Let this be *demonstrated*, and moreover, before this can be done, the Pope of Rome must become just such a Bishop as Peter was, for the office is the same, and he must therefore put himself on a footing with Peter; do the work which Peter did, going about from place to place, preaching Christ crucified, (for I doubt not such work is as much needed at Rome *now* as it was in the days of Peter) and let him not sit in a chair of splendour, ease and luxury, with a host of crouching minions to kiss his great toe, and pamper his fleshly lusts. Peter acted not so; neither had he any thing to do with civil affairs, such as armies, revenues, crowns and thrones.

## CHAPTER II.

### EXCLUSIVE SALVATION.

“Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,—seeketh not her own.” Paul.

What will Papists deny next? They deny that it is a principle of their Church to withhold the scriptures from the common people. In the next chapter we shall show that this is a principle of the Romish Church, at present we shall confine ourselves to the denial that *exclusive* salvation is a doctrine of that church. Papists would fain have us believe that they are very liberal and charitable in their sentiments towards Protestants, but it is all a sham. We should shudder at the idea that no Roman Catholics are saved, but in the language of another we must say that “they are saved not *by the* Romish religion, but *in spite of it.*” I indulge the hope, if ever I am permitted to enter Heaven, to meet there, clothed *only in the* righteousness of Christ, *and justified by faith alone*, the *two* late venerable Archbishops of Baltimore, in their rejoicing, ascribing their salvation only to the merits and intercession of Christ, the *imagined intercessions* of the *Virgin Mary*, and of the *Saints*, will be forgotten.

Exclusive Salvation, we are well aware, was not held by one of these Archbishops, (see Bishop Carroll’s reply to Rev. Dr. Wharton, of N. J.) Whether or not this was held by the other, we are unable to say, but our present object is to notice a very confident assertion in a late number of the “United States Catholic Miscellany,” that the church of Rome, does not hold and never did hold, neither can any Romish writer be found who has said, that salvation was impossible out of



that Church. We do not profess to give the words, but the idea of the writer. Now let us test the truth of this assertion. The decree of Pope Boniface VIII., is that “we declare, say, define and pronounce—that it is altogether *of necessity to salvation*, that *every creature be subject* to the Roman Pontiff.” This is the decree as it now stands in *the common extravagants*.\* Innocent III., who lived in the beginning of the thirteenth century, in his decretals, (lib. i. c. 33.) declares that every human creature ought to be subject to the Roman Pontiff, and that this subjection is *absolutely necessary* to salvation. Pope Pius V. begins his Bull against Queen Elizabeth of England, with these words: “He that reigneth on high, &c. hath committed the one Holy Catholic and Apostolical Church, *out of which there is no salvation*, to one alone on earth, namely, to Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and to the *Roman Pontiff*, successor of Peter, to be governed with a plenitude of power.” (Cambd. Hist. Anno. 1570.) Pope Pius II., in his bull of Retraction (though he seems not to have been of the same opinion while Æneas Sylvus) says, “He cannot be saved that does not hold to the unity of the Catholic faith;” and Pope Leo X., in his Lateran Council, and in his bull therein read and passed, says, “we do renew and approve the same Constitution, (viz. of Pope Boniface VIII., above mentioned,) the present sacred council also approving it;”† and Pope Pius IV., in his bull wherein he confirms the council of Trent, imposes an oath upon Ecclesiastical persons wherein they swear “that the Holy Catholic Church, and the

\* Subesse Romano Pontifici omni humanæ creaturæ declaramus, dicimus, definimus et pronunciamus omnino esse de necessitate Salutis. Extrav. Com. Lib. i. Tit. 8. Cap. i.

† Constitutionem ipsam sacro præsentî Concilio approbante, innovamus et approbamus. Concil. Lateran. Sess. ii. p. 153.

Apostolic *Roman* Church is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, and that *this* is the *true Catholic faith*, without *which no man can be saved*." This bull, or as it is more commonly called, this creed of Pius IV., bears date, the ides of November, 1564, and concludes in the usual manner with threats of the indignation of God, and of his blessed apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, against all that shall infringe or oppose it. This creed was drawn up by Pius IV., in pursuance of an order of the council of Trent, and bears this title: "A bull concerning a form of an *oath* of profession of Faith." This creed is sometimes called the Trent Creed, and this "*Oath*," as they call it, all Ecclesiastical persons are bound to take.

Such a doctrine is unsuited to the enlightened charity of the present day, and it appears with a very ill grace in the creed of those who are continually crying out, "*persecution*," "*want of liberality*," "*uncharitable*." Romanists, with a dash of the pen, can send all Protestants to hell (for they will not allow them even the privilege of purgatory.) But if Protestants *presume* to examine the tenets of the "Infallible Church," they are accused of persecution and illiberality.

But, how is this clause in the Trent Creed explained so as to give as little offence to Protestants as possible? In the "U. States Catholic Miscellany." Vol. ix, p. 294. It is said, "this clause implying exclusive salvation, is confined to the belief that the obstinate rejection of revealed truth, *daily propounded* is criminal." But *by what church* does the author mean, this truth is propounded? By Protestant Churches? No, for Protestants do not reject it as propounded by them: propounded by the Bible? No, for they do not reject that. But the Romish Church is meant; if Protestants reject truth as propounded by her, they are criminal.

But this does not clear up the difficulty. A little further on it is said, "as therefore the (Roman) Catholic is convinced, that the (Roman) Church is the pillar and ground of the truth, he concludes the profession of the articles proposed to him, declaring his belief that without this Catholic faith, no one can obtain salvation. But he does not thereby consign to eternal misery, such as inculpably might be ignorant of some particular doctrine." But what Protestant is regarded by them as *inculpably ignorant* of their doctrines? Are not all Protestants to *blame*, who, when able, *will not* come to the Church and learn her tenets? Again, what is meant by saying, that they are not sent to Hell, who are *inculpably ignorant*? Is not here an artful Jesuitical use of words to deceive the common reader? Is it not an insult to a man's sense, to tell him with all the gravity of an instructor, that the man who is not *blameable* is not *blamed*, that the man who is *inculpable* is not *culpable*? Is this the way to explain an article of religious faith? The question which Romanists are called upon to answer is, are not the Protestants, who are either acquainted with, or are willingly ignorant of the Romish doctrines, regarded as rejectors of that faith, without which, the creed of Pius IV, declares, "no man can be saved?" Let this question be answered *categorically*; and if they are not ashamed of their doctrines, nor afraid to avow them; if they have unshaken confidence in their being able to stand the test of scriptural examination, let them by plainly stated. If therefore they do not believe that Protestants who *know their doctrines*, or are *wilfully ignorant* of them and yet *reject them*, will *not be saved*, let them say so in plain language.

### CHAPTER III.

#### WITHHOLDING THE SCRIPTURES BY THE ROMISH CHURCH.

“The Bible burns the *Devil* and the *Pope* burns the Bible!”  
*Antidote to Popery.*

Having examined the Pope's claim to supremacy, and the doctrine of exclusive salvation, we come now to notice a practice of the Romish church which at once fixes on her the character of *anti-christ*. namely, that of *withholding the scriptures from the common people*. We shall hereafter examine the *right* of the Romish church to withhold the scriptures, and also the *propriety* of the practice; but at present our attention will be confined to the fact of prohibition.—It has been denied by papists that this is a principle of their church, and they are now very solicitous to do away such an impression from the minds of the people. But while they thus profess (in direct opposition to the principles of their church, as we shall show) to be favorable to the general circulation of the scriptures—they in fact prevent it all they can; and indeed to be consistent with themselves they must prevent it, for the people are forbidden under a heavy penalty, as we shall hereafter show, to understand the scriptures differently from the church. But can this be prevented if the scriptures are to be put into the hands of every body, unless they surrender their reason, and judgment, and sense up to the priest? and if this surrender be made, is it not a farce to put the Bible into their hands? What object can they possibly have in reading it, if they are not to use their reason and sense, which God has given them for the purpose, in endeavoring to understand it? You might as well give to the people the *Latin vulgate* at once.



Prefixed to the spurious copy of the Doway Bible, I find a letter purporting to be from Pius the sixth to Anthony Martini, now archbishop of Florence, on his translation of the Bible into Italian. Whether this letter be a forgery or not, I cannot say; but this I can say; that the following passage in it, is in direct opposition to an order of the council of Trent, “for these (the Scriptures) are the most abundant sources which *ought to be left open to EVERY ONE*, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrines to *eradicate the errors* which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times: This you have reasonably effected, as you declare, by publishing the sacred writings in the *language of your country, suitable to every one’s capacity.*” In the “*admonition*” immediately above this letter on the same page is the following sentence: “To prevent and remedy this *abuse*, (the unlearned wresting the scriptures to their perdition) and to guard against *error*, it was *judged necessary to forbid the reading of the Scriptures in the vulgar languages, without the advice and permission of the pastors and Spiritual Guides* whom God has appointed to govern his church.” Here we see it is the Pope’s opinion that the scriptures should be open to EVERY ONE. But in the “*admonition*” which agrees with the council of Trent, as we shall presently see, it is said to be *necessary to withhold them from some*. This is a specimen of popish inconsistency. But the whole secret of the matter is this, Popish priests are *commanded* to withhold the Bible from *some*, and they are *privileged* by the church, to withhold it *from all*, if they choose to consider them unworthy, or in danger of being hurt by it; so that while they *boast of*, and make a great noise about their right of *permitting* the scriptures to be read, they really practice on the privilege of withholding them from all they possibly can. Therefore when a papist denies that his

church forbids the reading of the scriptures, he is to be understood as saying, that the church does not absolutely and unconditionally forbid it, but she does forbid some, and she gives the priests power to grant permission to read to others. And who could ask a greater restriction to the privilege of reading the Bible than this? Is it not left to the option of every priest whether the Scriptures shall be read in his parish or not? Is it not taking away the right of reading them altogether from the people? Most assuredly 'it is, and this is our complaint. The people's right, religious as well as civil, should ever be respected. This much we would say as *patriots*, but as *christians* we would say more; we would say, let manacles be put on their hands and feet; but give them the liberty of conscience; strip them of their clothing and deprive them of their shelter and extort from them their last, hard earned pittance; but give them the last will and testament of their Lord and Master, in which is bequeathed to all who will accept of it, a rich inheritance in the skies. Oh! keep not from them the written reprieve from that righteous Governor, by whose law they stand condemned. It is their legacy, and it is the charter of their dearest and most sacred rights.

That what we have stated to be a principle of the Romish Church, we shall now endeavor to make appear from their own words. The decrees of the Council, especially of that of Trent, every priest on his admission to Holy orders, binds himself to believe and defend. Now what says the infallible church on the subject before us? The fourth rule of the *index libr. prohibit.* made in pursuance of the order of the Council of Trent and published by Pius IV., runs thus: "Since it is manifest by experience, that if the Holy Bible be promiscuously permitted in the vulgar tongue, by reason of the rashness of men, more loss than profit will thence arise. In this

matter let the judgment of the Bishop or Inquisition be stood to, that with the advice of the Parish priest or confessor, they may grant the reading of the Bible in the vulgar tongue, translated by Catholic authors, to such as they shall understand, can receive no hurt by such reading, but increase of faith and piety; which faculty let them have in writing. But he that without such faculty shall presume to read, or to have the Bible, he may not receive absolution of his sins, except he first deliver up his Bible to the ordinary." Here we have the church's own words; we care not what a Romish priest may say on this subject. We have the words of the church, and we can judge of their meaning as well as he can, though he denies it, yet these very words of the church contradict him.

Monsieur de Maire, Counsellor Almoner and Preacher to the King of France, in a book published by authority, says: "this rule is founded in ecclesiastical right, and no man can transgress it, without contradicting that obedience which he owes to the church and the Holy See, from which it hath received its confirmation. For as much as this rule was not made but in prosecution of the decree of the council of Trent, &c. No man can deny but that it has been approved by the Holy See, and authorized by the bulls of Pius IV, and Clement VIII, who, after they had viewed and diligently examined it, published it to the world, with order that it should be obeyed." "If there be any thing," continues de Maire, "that can hinder this rule from having the force of a law, it must be either, because it has not been published, or being published, has not been received; but neither the one nor the other can be said, since it is evident that this is the old quarrel we have with our heretics; this is that which our church has always been upbraided with by the enemies of the faith; this is that which is the subject

of their most outrageous calumnies; this is that which has been acknowledged by all wise men; that which has been earnestly maintained by all the defenders of Catholic truth; that which no person is ignorant of; that which the whole world publishes; there being no point of belief more common, nor more general among the faithful, than this of the *prohibition to read the Bible without permission*: and this belief (says he) so common, is a certain proof, not only of the publication but of the reception of this rule."\* This prohibition, then, to read the Bible without permission is in force now. It is an infallible decree and must forever be in force: who has repealed it? what council of equal authority has set it aside? The Spanish Expurgatory Index goes still farther. It prohibits the Bible in the vulgar tongue, not only printed, but in MSS. without any provision for permission.

Alfonsus de Castro† says, that Ferdinand King of Spain, forbade any man under the heaviest penalties, to translate the Bible into the vulgar tongue, to keep any Bible in his hands already translated; and the index of Pope Alexander VII, not only these Bibles that are translated and printed by heretics; but all Bibles in any vulgar tongue are prohibited. It would therefore be ridiculous to talk of a license in Spain, because the Bible itself is not there permitted in the vulgar tongue, and all that is permitted in other countries is, that a man may read the Holy Scriptures in case he can get a license for it. The council of Trent, as we see above, declare that a vulgar translation of the Scriptures would occasion more harm than good. But what harm have the Scriptures ever caused? Let Romanists answer this question and substantiate their an-

\*Vide, Le Sanctuaire ferme aux Profanes, part 2, c. 1, p. 335-6.

- †Advers. Hæres. Liber. 1. c. 13,



swer with facts. They say it breeds heresies: the scriptures do indeed breed heresy; but it is just as the Law of God breeds sin; by ferreting it out; dragging it from its secret dens; exposing it to the world; and charging it home with powerful conviction on the consciences of men. When the Law came, says Paul, sin revived and I died. When the scriptures come, say the Romanists, popish superstitions and abominations come to light, and the beast must die. Iræneus says, "ignorance of the word of God is the cause of all these heresies."

Romanists boldly deny that their church withholds the scriptures: but they say she expressly permits them to be read. But to whom is this permission granted? is it to all men indifferently? Is it granted to all who ask it? No; but to those only who they know can receive no hurt from them; that is, those who are not in danger of preferring their own sense before that which they receive from the priests and the church. And is it probable that such would ever ask permission? For why should they desire to read the scriptures, who have already determined right or wrong, to believe just as the priests bid them? And if others ask it, they will be immediately suspected to be of the number of those who are in the greatest danger of receiving hurt from the scriptures: so that the great noise that is made about permission, to read them is all a sham; since those who would be most likely to obtain permission, are the least likely to ask it: and those who most desire it, least likely to obtain it.

At the reformation, it was found impossible to keep the Bible out of the hands of the common people: and their refusing absolution of sins to those who refused to deliver up their Bibles to the ordinary, was a device of the clergy to get the Bible again into their hands. This is plain from the addition to the fourth rule of the Trent

Expurgatory index, made by Clement VIII, when a new edition was published, viz. “That by this impression or edition, no new faculty is given to Bishops, or Inquisitors, or any superiors of Regulars to grant a licence of buying, reading or retaining the Bible in the vulgar tongue; since hitherto by the command and usage of the Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition, that faculty of granting such licences of reading or retaining the vulgar Bibles or any parts of the Holy Scriptures, as well of the New as the Old Testament, in any vulgar tongue has been taken from them: which, says Clement, is to be inviolably observed.” If then this power, formerly given, of granting licences, be taken away, and no new power of granting them be given; it necessarily follows, that there is now no such thing as the power of granting permission to read the Bible; or had there been such power before this new edition of the rule, yet it was then taken away by the Pope in decreeing that the command and usage of the Holy Inquisition was to be inviolably observed. And lest some should have presumption to read the Bible notwithstanding the penalty, the booksellers who shall dispose of them to such, besides the loss of the price of the books, are liable to be *punished at the Bishop’s pleasure.*

Having now seen the rule of the Council of Trent on this subject, and the Pope’s addition to it. Let us look at the language of a Romish work of high authority, and see if it does not coincide (as indeed it should) with the infallible *dictum* of the council.

The Rhemish Translators of the New Testament say in their preface, that their church has “neither of old, nor of late, *wholly* condemned *all* vulgar versions of scripture, nor have at any time *generally* forbidden the faithful to read the same; yet they have not by public authority, prescribed, commanded, or authentically ever

recommended any such (i. e. vulgar) interpretation to be *indifferently used of all men.*" What do these writers mean by saying their church has not *generally* forbidden the faithful to read the scriptures? They must mean either that the church has not forbidden it at *all times*; or that she has not forbidden *all persons*, but either way it condemns them, for the Bible should be read at all times and by all persons. Besides, their never having commanded or even recommended a vulgar translation to be read by the people, is the neglect of a manifest duty, if it be the people's privilege to read the Bible. It looks very much like keeping the sacred volume out of the hands of the people little further on, the translators say "which causeth the Holy church, not to forbid *utterly* any catholic translation, though she *allow* not the *publishing* or *reading* of any, absolutely and without exception or limitation." The expression "*utterly*" here, is explained by the power of granting licences to read, which we have considered. A little further on they say, "and therefore neither *generally permitteth* that which *MUST needs do hurt* to the unworthy, nor *absolutely* condemneth that which *MAY* do much good to the worthy." Here we see what they mean by "*generally forbidding.*" It is that they do not *absolutely* forbid it, but will in some cases *permit* it.

The translators then go on to give the substance of the order of the Council of Trent, which we have noticed above, they highly approve of it, and say it is what "many a *wise man* wished for before." They then go on to say that the governors of the church guided by God's spirit, and experiencing the maladies of this time (soon after the reformation) have taken more exact order both for the readers and translators of these latter ages than of old; yet, say they, "we must not imagine that the *translated Bibles in the vulgar tongues were in*

*the hands of every husbandman, artificer, prentice, boys, girls, mistresses, maid, man, &c. no, in those better times men were neither so ill, nor so curious of themselves so to abuse the blessed book of Christ."* Here, then, we see it is considered by Papists an *abuse* of the bible for *farmers, mechanics, children and servants* to read it. They are not fit to read it, and they have no business with it! What shall we say to this? It is plain language, but it is their own: farmers! mechanics! will you submit to it? Will you give up your senses, your bibles, your souls and your children's souls, to popish Priests? Will you calmly and without a murmur of disapprobation, witness the spread of sentiments like these? What if Papists endeavour to deceive you by denying these to be the principles and sentiments of their church? Have you not the decree of their infallible council? Have you not the orders and bulls of their Popes, and have you not the language of their writers? And are you not able to judge for yourselves? Can you not understand commands and prohibitions, when clothed in plain language, as well as artful Priests? Need you be told that the principles of their church *never change*? Need you be told that it is the policy of Papists to disown those principles when they are unpopular, unsuited to the feelings, and opposed to the better knowledge of a free people?

"The wise," continue the translators, "will not here regard what some wilful people do mutter, that the scriptures *are made for all men*, and that it is envy that the priests *do keep the holy book from them*, which suggestion cometh of the same serpent that seduced our first parents," &c. Here is a candid confession that the scriptures are not made for all men: and that the Priests *do keep the holy book from the people*, and that



the idea of its being wrong, is from the Devil! What will Papists say to this? They then say that their church “forbiddeth not the reading of them (the scriptures) in any language \*\*\*\*\* but giveth order how to do it without casting the holy to dogs, or pearls to hogs, (Chrysostom declaring these dogs and hogs to be carnal men and heretics.) \*\*\*\*\* She would have the presumptuous heretic, notwithstanding he alledge them never so fast, flying as it were through the whole Bible and quoting the Psalms, Prophets, Gospels, Epistles, never so readily to his purpose (a great compliment, by the way, to Protestant knowledge of the Scriptures) yet she would, according to Tertullian’s rule, have such mere usurpers quite *discharged of all our occupying and possession of the Holy Testament, which is hēr old and only right* and inheritance, and belongeth not to heretics (Protestants) at all.” This is enough for the strongest stomach: But there is more still. They say that Chrysostom does not (as some perversely gather of his words) make it a thing absolutely *needful for every poor artisan to read* or study the scriptures: and they say that the Fathers were far from approving of “the excessive pride and madness of these days (soon after the reformation. Oh! these were troublesome times for the enemies to Bible reading) when *every man and woman* is become not only a *reader* (dear me! that is bad enough) but a *teacher*, controller, and *judge* of doctors, church, scriptures and all!” Surely it is a dreadful thing for every man and woman “to search the Scriptures,” and to appeal “to the law and to the testimony” for the confirmation or rejection of doctrines; and to require, a “thus saith the scriptures” for all that is proposed to them for their belief. I know indeed that this touch-stone, like the Magician’s wand, would cause many a Popish dogma to vanish, and this is the

very reason why Papists are so much opposed to the circulation and general reading of the scriptures.

There is one other passage in this preface which we cannot forbear inserting here. It expresses the sentiments of the Council of Trent that the general reading of the scriptures does more harm than good. The translators boastingly say, "Look, whether your men be more virtuous, your women more chaste, your children more obedient, your servants more trusty, your maids more modest, your friends more faithful, your laity more just in dealing, your clergy more devout in praying: whether there be more religion, fear of God, faith and conscience in all states now, (since the reformation, when the scriptures are more read) than of old when *there was not so much reading, chatting, and jangling* of God's word." Can it be possible that the reading of God's word makes men *less* virtuous, women *less* chaste, children *less* obedient, &c. &c.? Is this the doctrine of a *christian* church? If it be a true doctrine, then indeed, the Romish church is right in forbidding the reading of the scriptures. Here, then, we see the infallible council of Trent, and the learned Rhemish doctors declaring it as their deliberate opinions that the general reading of the scriptures is productive of more evil than good; and yet Papists will declare it is a doctrine of the church that they should be generally read; and they profess their willingness (but it is *mere profession*) to have them generally read. What! will they countenance and encourage that which is infallibly declared to be productive of more harm than good? But let us see in what manner they evade the charge of prohibiting the general reading of the scriptures, for the *very manner* of evading it, is an acknowledgment of the principle we charge upon them.

## CHAPTER IV.

### WITHHOLDING THE SCRIPTURES FROM THE PEOPLE CONTINUED.

“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”

Therefore, behold, I am against the Prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.

Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness.”

Jer. xxiii. 29—32.

Romanists deny that it is a principle of their church to withhold the scriptures from the common people. They say that she expressly permits them to be read. We have already seen what is the order of the council of Trent as to this point; and we leave every intelligent mind to the proper construction upon it. We grant that the church of Rome *permits* the reading of the scriptures; but it is only to those who are so firmly grounded in the Romish faith as to be in no danger of having their confidence in her dogmas at all shaken. But out of their own mouths we will condemn them. The church of Rome *permits* the Bible to be read! pray, what does *permitting* imply, but the power of *forbidding*? Who is this that undertakes to *permit* God to speak to his creatures! God beheld our race in ruin: he pitied us in our fallen state, and in great mercy made provision for our restoration to his favour and to happiness; he sends to us the tidings of this great salvation; he reveals to us the terms of reconciliation. It is a matter of

eternal life and of eternal death. Hell yawns to receive us; Christ has died to redeem us; we must believe or perish. The offended king speaks pardon and peace; the majesty of Heaven commands, "give ear O earth," "give ear all ye inhabitants of the world," and who is this that steps forward *and gives permission* to the "earth" and "all the inhabitants of the world" to hear what the mighty God would say! Jehovah commands "give ear O my people," but who is this that interferes and gives *permission* to the Almighty, the Omniscient God, to speak to his creatures? who permits Him to speak to those only who are in no danger of being injured or led astray by his communications? Impious presumption! High-handed rebellion against the sovereign of the Universe!

Will Papists deny that their church claims the privilege of *permitting* the common people to read the Bible? Will they deny that she claims the *right to forbid their* reading it? This is what we charge upon them; and if this be not a principle of their church, I call upon them to say what is a principle of their church? What constitutes a principle, if infallible decrees do not? If they deny that their church claims any such privilege or any such right, let them explain the import of the order of the council of Trent; of the 4th rule of the Expurgatory Index, and of the addition by Clement; and let them explain the bull of Pope Pius VII., issued in 1816, enforcing the order of the council of Trent, prohibiting the Bible to be read by all. This principle of the Romish church has been well compared to a case where a sovereign, some of whose subjects are in a state of rebellion, issues a proclamation of a pardon on condition of submitting and returning to him. And the magistrates of the riotous town assemble to consult as to the



propriety of publishing that proclamation to the rebel citizens. Now does not every one see that even if they agreed to publish it, their act of consultation and formal agreement to publish the proclamation, would be putting their authority on an equal footing with that of the Sovereign! Who does not see that such conduct would be presumption and rebellion?

If the church of Rome does not prohibit the promiscuous reading of the Bible, how does it come that so many of their writers have so formally and so gravely defended the propriety of such a prohibition? Is it not a notorious fact that the controversy with the most of Romish writers on this subject, has not been about the *fact* of prohibition, but about the *propriety* of it?

If the church of Rome has so much regard to the people's right to read the scriptures, how does it come that there was no vulgar translation in use when Wickliffe arose! and why did his translation excite such great commotion in the church, and bring down upon him the vengeance of Popes and Councils?

"Wickliff's translation alone," says Milner, "sufficed to render his name immortal. The value of it was unspeakable; and his unwearied pains to propagate the genuine doctrines of revelation among mankind, indicated the steady zeal with which he was endowed; *while the rage with which the hierarchy was inflamed against a work so undeniably seasonable*, demonstrated that the ecclesiastical rulers hated the light, and would not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved.\*

\*Milner's Ch. Hist. iv. 91.

*Note.*—Wickliffe, in his prologue to the translation, informs us of the method in which he proceeded, notwithstanding the opposition he met with, and the clamors that were raised against him on the account. 1. He with several who assisted him, got together all the Latin Bibles they could, which they diligently

When Sixtus V., who was a whimsical Pope,\* published an Italian version of the scriptures in 1589, it produced a great excitement in Romish Christendom, some of the cardinals expostulated with him very freely on the subject, and said it was *scandalous* as well as dangerous, and *bordered very nearly on heresy!* But Papists say they have translations of the scriptures: there is the Doway Bible and the Rhemish translation. Inasmuch as both these translations contain the fundamentals of the gospel plan of salvation, if they were stripped of their cumbersome load of notes, we should be glad to see them in general circulation *rather than none at all*: but as to the Doway Bible, it is a well known fact that papists will not sell a protestant *genuine* edition, if they can help it, and the common edition, sold in our cities, is a spurious edition: and as to the Rhemish translation, its quantity of notes renders its general circulation alto-

\* See his life, 8vo. p. 562.

collated and corrected, in order that they might have one Latin Bible near the truth. In the next place, they collected the ordinary comments, with which they studied the text so as to make themselves masters of its sense and meaning. Lastly, they consulted the old grammarians and ancient divines, respecting the hard words and sentences. After all this was done, Wickliff then set about the translation, which he resolved, should *not* be a literal one, but so as to express the meaning as clearly as he could.

*Milner's Ch. Hist.* vol. iv. p. 398.

A specimen of Wickliff's New Testament, in the old English of his time, may be pleasing to the reader.

John x. 26—30. "Ye beleven not, for ye ben not of my scheep. My scheep heren my vois, and I knowe hem, and thei suen me. And I gyve to hem everlastynge life, & thei schulen not perische, withouten end; & noon schal rauysche hem fro myn hond. That thing that my Fadir gaf to me, is more than alle thingis; & no man may rauysche from my Fadirs hond. I & the Fadir ben oon."

gether impracticable. The papists object to the circulation of our translation professedly because it is an heretical translation: but let any one take the pains to visit the Romish communion, especially the poor, to whom there are express injunctions to us to preach the gospel, and see how many copies, even of the Romish translation of the scriptures, he would find among them. Is it a fact that papists do circulate even their own translations among the people? No: their objection to the circulation of the scriptures is too obvious to be concealed. But lest it should seem we were too harsh, we will give their opinion of the necessity of such a circulation in their own words.

The Rhemish translators in their preface say, (speaking of their own work,) “which translation we do not, for all that, publish upon erroneous opinions of necessity that the holy scriptures should always be in our mother tongue: or that they ought or were ordained of God to be read indifferently of all, or could be easily understood of every one that readeth or heareth them in a known language: pernicious and much hurtful to many: or that we generally and absolutely deem it more convenient in itself and more agreeable to God’s word and honour: or edification of the faithful *to have them turned into vulgar tongues*, than to be kept and studied only in the ecclesiastical learned languages: *not for these* nor for any such like causes, do we translate this sacred book, but upon special consideration of the present time, state and condition of our country, unto which divers things are either necessary or profitable and medicinable now, that otherwise in the peace of the church, were neither more requisite, nor perchance wholly tolerable.” (See preface to the Rhemish translation of the N. T. 2d paragraph.) Let not papists

boast of this translation being made for the people; for we here see in their own words, the reason of it. It was not because such a translation was necessary, not because the scriptures should be read by all, nor because God commands them to be read by all, (“*search the scriptures;*”) not because they were necessary to edification, or even agreeable to the word and honour of God; but because in these times, (soon after the reformation) the people seem anxious and determined to have them, and if we do not give them a translation, some one else will, and if we do not guard our translation with notes and comments, to prevent their speaking differently from what the church teaches, they will get one without such interpreters; so that we are now driven in self-defence to let the people take a peep into the last will and testament of their Lord and Master. Before the reformation, when the church was in peace, it was not requisite or even tolerable to have the Bible in the vulgar tongue, lest it should be read by all who pleased; but now it seems necessary, for they will have it, and we must submit. The people are beginning to have too much light; they are beginning to understand their rights. It is a lamentable thing. But alas! alas!!

Papists may still boast that they *permit* the common people to read the scriptures, but I ask upon what condition are they permitted to read them? This is the condition, viz: that they will not understand them to teach a different doctrine from that which they have heard from the church! Here is the proof contained in the following extract from the decree of the infallible Council of Trent, concerning the edition and use of the sacred books. “Besides, for restraining petulant wits, it decrees that no man leaning to his own understanding in matters of faith and morals, pertaining to the edifica-

tion of Christian doctrine, twisting the holy scriptures to their own sense, dare to interpret the holy scriptures contrary to the sense, that the holy mother church (to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense of the holy scriptures) hath holden or does hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, though these interpretations be never intended to be published. Those who contravene this statute shall be reported by the ordinary, and punished by the pains ordained by the law."

Here then we see the condition on which the people are permitted to read the scriptures; they are to give up their own sense and judgment in return for this permission; they are to forego all the advantage that could possibly accrue from a reading of the scriptures, by way of an equivalent for the privilege of reading them. To what purpose does a man read the scriptures, who has determined before hand not to understand them differently from the church! To what purpose does a man appeal to the law and to the testimony, who has pledged himself before hand to believe that all the testimony is in favour of a particular church? Is not this trifling with the word of God? Is it not measuring the scriptures by the church, rather than judging of the church by the scriptures? Most assuredly it is; and this is not denied, but taught explicitly by the Rhemish translators.

But in order to exhibit as clearly as possible the contrast between the text and the comment, I shall put them in separate columns. In their comment upon Acts xvii. 11, they say—



“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

Acts xvii. 11.

“The heretics use this place to prove that the hearers must try and judge by the scriptures, whether their teachers and preachers’ doctrine be true, and so reject what they find not in the scriptures: as though here the sheep were made judges of their pastors: the people of their priests and men and women of all sorts even of St. Paul’s doctrine itself; which were the most foolish doctrine in the world.”

Now can papists consistently use such language as this, and at the same time circulate the scriptures? Of what use are they, if we are not allowed the use of our sense and reason in understanding them? Suppose an honest reader of the Bible should understand it differently from the Romish church; suppose he should not understand Christ as saying that the bread which he held in his hand at the supper with his disciples, and which he called *bread*, after he had blessed it, was his real body, blood, soul and divinity; suppose he should not understand the Bible as saying that Christ eat up his own body, and that each of his disciples also eat up his whole body, and yet he remained with them entirely whole, talking and eating himself with them all the time, and the next morning died on the cross: suppose he should not understand the Bible as teaching this, what is to be done with him? why, unless he disbelieves his own senses, takes leave of his wits, and believes that which he sees to be an absurdity, he must be “reported by the ordinary, and be punished by the pains ordained by the law” for daring to understand the scriptures differently

from the church! Is not this virtually withholding the scriptures from the people? For if the book is not withheld, their senses are, and of what use is the one without the other? So that the whole parade of papists about permitting the scriptures amounts to this; if you will retain your senses, you shall not have the Bible, and if you will have the Bible, you shall not have your senses; therefore take your choice. This dilemma is a real one: it is founded on the decree of the Council of Trent, and recognized by the Rhemish translators.

So fearful are papists, notwithstanding this decree, that the people will exercise their private judgment in the interpretation of scripture, that they have resorted to the last remaining expedient to prevent it, by influencing the judgment with such numerous and extensive notes accompanying the text. If papists do circulate the scriptures at all, it is never without their notes, as if they could not trust the Bible to speak for itself; but lest God in his communications to his people should err, they stand by to correct him. But why will not the Romish Church *permit* (for they have assumed the prerogative of *permitting* to themselves,) God to speak to his creatures without their officious interference? Is it difficult to assign the reason? Is there not some danger that he would speak decidedly against them! The following has been stated as an analagous case. Suppose a court of justice would not allow a witness to give in his testimony in his own words, but should cause it to pass through the prisoner or his council. Let it receive all their polish and gloss before it reached the jury, and what would be the consequence? Would the naked truth appear? would strict impartial justice be administered? Then why put the gloss of popery on the word of God before it can be trusted to speak to the people!

Now from all that has been said, can the candid mind

get away from the conclusion, that let papists deny what they will, it is clearly a *principle* of the Romish church, to *withhold* the scriptures from the common people! The people feel that their rights are invaded; they feel that they are treated with shameful neglect; their souls are as precious as the Pope's, and it requires the same price to redeem, and the same cleansing blood to purify the one as the other: they have an equal right to all the means of grace: and the Bible is their treasure as much as that of the church: it is to be a lamp to their feet and a light to their path, as much as to those of the Councils. And to throw the odium off themselves which in this enlightened and enquiring age, they feel to be great, papists positively deny the point, we have been endeavouring to establish; but it is in vain; the records and decrees of the church speak for themselves: and suppose papists do not now actually adhere to what we have clearly shown to be the authorized practice of the church, what does it prove? Why, that they are *perjured men*! They bind themselves by a solemn oath to approve and carry into effect all the decrees of Councils, *especially* of the *Council of Trent*: and where, let me add, is their infallibility? that clinching power, that fastens upon modern Romanism all the abominations and superstitions of the darkest ages; and forever binds that church to the practice of sanctioned rites, however cruel and arbitrary, and however opposed to the light and genius of the present day, and revolting to the spirit of enlightened christianity, and to the enlarged and liberal feelings of the nineteenth century in America!

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PROPRIETY OF WITHHOLDING THE SCRIPTURES.

“The different parts of Luther’s German translation of the Holy Scriptures, being successively and gradually spread abroad among the people, produced sudden and almost incredible effects, and extirpated, root and branch, the erroneous principles and superstitious doctrines of the Church of Rome, from the minds of a prodigious number of persons.”

*Mosheim’s Eccl. Hist. vol. iv. p. 60.*

It has now, I think, been clearly shown, to be a principle of the Romish church to prohibit the general reading of the scriptures by the common people. And if it be asked whether this principle be really acted upon by the Romish priests in this country, we have two answers: The one is, that if it be not really acted upon, we call upon papists to reconcile their practice with their principles: we call upon them to show how their disregard of an express prohibitory decree, and of the almost unanimous opinion of Romish writers, since that decree, concurring with it, comports with the claim to infallibility, and to unity of sentiment and practice: The other answer is, that if any one will take the pains to visit the Romish communion, even in this country, or listen to the reiterated statements of agents engaged in the distribution of the Bible, he will be convinced of the mournful fact that the principle of prohibition is acted upon as strictly as possible.

Considering it, therefore, as manifest that the general reading of the Bible is prohibited, we shall now proceed to examine the *propriety* of such a prohibition. And indeed until lately this was the only controversy on this

point between papists and protestants ; for until lately but a very few papists ever denied it, and they denied it only in an equivocal and evasive manner. For who ever will look into the controversy on this subject, will find that it is almost wholly about the *propriety*, and not the *fact* of prohibition. And this simple fact speaks a volume of proof that such is the principle of the Romish church.

In the first place then—the Holy Scriptures were originally written in the vulgar language of the people. That the books of Moses and the Prophets were written in the common language of the Jews is generally granted by Romanists.\*

As to the New Testament the only question is concerning the gospel of Matthew and the epistle to the Hebrews: and there can be but little doubt that they were both written in Greek, which was then the vulgar tongue in almost every nation. Some have objected that the Latin was the tongue of the Romans, and yet Paul wrote his epistle in Greek: but it is well known that the Greek language was more generally known than the Latin, even at Rome, at this time, especially by strangers and Jews, to whom Paul had a special regard in his epistle.† Both men and women at Rome understood Greek at this time, and as Arnaud (above quoted) says, they even taught it to their parrots.‡ If Matthew's gospel was written in Hebrew at first, Hebrew must have been the vulgar tongue of the Jews at Jerusalem, for whose sake that gospel was principally written. At all events it is evident that by Hebrew, those ancient writers, to state the fact, meant the vulgar tongue of the Jews during the

\* See Arnaud, (a Romanist,) de la lect. de l'ecrit. saint, lib. 1. c. 4. p. 55.

† See Grotius Annot. in Evan. Matt. and Eps. ad Heb.

‡ De la lect. &c. lib. 2. c. 13.



time of the Apostles; for in the gospel itself it is frequently said that a thing was so called in *Hebrew*, when it is evident that it was so called in Syriac. For example “He went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew *Golgotha*.” Now the fact is, *Golgotha* is not a *Hebrew* but a *Syriac* word; by *Hebrew* then, Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, &c. who state that Matthew wrote in Hebrew, manifestly mean that language which was common with the Jews. This is strongly asserted by Bellarmine, whose authority a papist should not deny.\* The same is stated by Estius whose authority with papists is equal with Bellarmine’s.† Eusebius expressly asserts that Matthew wrote his gospel in the language of his country.‡ And as both Greek and Syriac were languages generally understood by the Jews, it matters not, so far as our argument is concerned, in which the epistle to the Hebrews was written. It is evident however that when the Fathers say it was written in Hebrew, they mean the vernacular tongue of Jerusalem at that time. The probability however is that it was written in Greek.¶ It is evident therefore that the scriptures were originally written in the vulgar language of the people.

The scriptures were directed to the people generally, and not to particular individuals. In Hos. viii. 12, it is said, “I have written to him the great things of my law;” and the verse preceding tells us to whom it was written, viz: to Ephraim, who is there put for the whole body of the Israelites. The first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians is directed to all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. The second, to the

\*See Bell. de verbo Dei, lib. 2. c. 4.

†See Estius Proleg. in Comment. in Epist. ad Heb.

‡See Eusebius History Eccl. lib. 3.

¶See Professor Stuart’s Com. on the Heb. vol. 1. p. 278. §39.

church of God which is at Corinth, with *all* the *saints* which are in all Achaia. The epistle to the Philippians is directed to all the saints at Philippi, together with the bishops and deacons. Will any man presume to say that this epistle was written merely to the bishops and deacons? If the epistles were written to the bishops only, why were they not all addressed to them as were those to Timothy and Titus? Paul commands the Colossians to read his epistle also to the church of the Laodicians,\* and he gives a solemn charge that his epistle to the Thessalonians should be read to all the holy brethrent† Who will say in the face of all this, that the common people ought not to read the scriptures without asking permission of a Romish priest? But not only is it the *privilege*, but it is the *duty* of *all* to read the scriptures.

In Deut. vi. ch. 6, 7, 8, 9, it is thus written: "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy *children*, and shalt *talk of* them when thou *sittest in thine house*, and when thou *walkest by the way*, and when thou *liest down*, and when thou *risest up*, and thou shalt bind them for a *sign upon thine hand*, and they shall be as *frontlets between thine eyes*, and thou shalt *write them* upon the posts of thy house and on thy gates."

Contrast with this the opinion of the Rhemish translators; in their preface, they say "our forefathers never suffered the Bible to be in the hands of husbandmen, mechanics, &c. not to be sung and played and alledged of every tinker, tanner, rimer, minstrel, nor to be for *table talk*, for *ale benches*, for *boats and barges*, &c. No in *those better times*, men were neither so *ill* nor so curious of themselves; so *to abuse* the blessed book of Christ."

Let every intelligent reader draw his own inference from this contrast. Turn also to Deut. xxxii. ch. 45,

\* Col. iv. 16.

† 1 Thess. v. 27.

46, 47, and see if in any of these passages Moses talks like a man who would not have the people so much as even read the words he had spoken to them.

In the New Testament, Christians are exhorted to let the words of Christ dwell in them richly and in all wisdom. We are commanded to search the scriptures. Timothy from a child had known the Holy Scriptures. It is required that the commandment be made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. And in looking over our Saviour's discourses as recorded by the Evangelists, we find a constant reference to scripture in this form, "ye have read" so and so, "have ye not read?" and the like.\* After reading these passages, can any one believe that the scriptures were not read by the people! Josephus, the learned Jewish historian, speaking of the ignorance of some people of their laws, says, "but for our people, if any body do but ask any one of them about our laws, he will more *readily tell them all*, than *he will tell his own name*, and this in consequence of our having learned them immediately as soon as ever we became sensible of any thing, and of our having them as it were engraven on our souls."† In Acts xvii. 11, we are told that the Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *sought the scriptures daily, whether* those things were so. Here we see that the Bereans not only received the word from the Apostles as they preached it, but they searched the scriptures for themselves; and for what? to yield an implicit and blind belief in what was taught them? No, but to see whether or not, it was according to scripture. The great force and excellency of the apostle's preach-

\* See Luke iv. 16. Matt. xix. 3, 4. xxi. 16, 42. xii. 5. xxii. 31. xxiv. 15. Luke vi. 3, &c.

† See Josep. Contr. Apion. lib. ii. §19.

ing was, that it condemned the Jews out of their own scriptures. He referred them constantly to the law and to the testimony, and thus showed from their own scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. The comment of the Rhemish translators on this passage is strangely absurd, as we have before seen; they say that this text is used by heretics (Protestants) to prove that the hearers must try and judge by the scriptures, whether their teachers and preachers doctrine be true, which they think were the most foolish doctrine in the world. They contend that the people did not read the scriptures to dispute with the Apostles, and to try and judge of his doctrine. Now if this be not a flat contradiction of the text, it is not good English. The Apostle says they searched whether what he taught was true or not: the Romanists say *they did no such thing*: WHOM SHALL WE BELIEVE?

There is a text which papists frequently adduce to show that the scriptures should not be read by all, which proves directly the contrary. This may seem strange but it is true. The text is 2 Peter 3. 16. "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are *unlearned* and *unstable* wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." Here the papist triumphantly asserts that the Apostle discountenances the reading of the scriptures by the unlearned and unstable; but does not this text manifestly prove that in those days they did read them? How else could they possibly have wrested them to their destruction? could they do it without ever having read them? And, besides, does the Apostle on this account, or because there were many things hard to be understood, say one word discountenancing the reading of the scriptures? No, neither of these reasons induced him to hint such an idea: and yet these reasons operate very powerfully with papists in not only *hinting*, but also *decree-*

ing the prohibition of the practice. In the verse preceding, the Apostle says that "his beloved brother Paul according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto *you*:" then he states that many things he said were hard to be understood and that the unlearned, &c. wrested them to their destruction; and in the succeeding verse, still addressing those to whom he said Paul had written, he says "*ye* therefore, beloved, *seeing ye know these things before, beware* lest *ye* also, being lead away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." Now here is an important thing to be noticed. It is plain that those to whom Paul had written are here warned by the example of those who had wrested the scriptures to their own destruction, and are cautioned against doing the same thing. Now to whom was Paul's epistle, here spoken of, addressed? to the *clergy*? Then *they* are placed upon a level with the people, and cautioned, as equally liable to be so led away by the wicked as to wrest the scriptures to their own destruction (which I verily believe they often do.) They should be withheld therefore from the *clergy*, for the same reason they are now withheld from the *people*! But will Papists admit that their *clergy* are thus warned by the example of the unlearned and unstable? If not, it must be the *people* that are thus cautioned and exhorted to take warning by the example just stated. If so, two inferences follow, both equally destructive to the papal cause: the first is, that as those cautioned are the same as those to whom Paul addressed his epistle here spoken of, they must also have been the *people*; and if so, what right have the clergy to withhold from them what Paul expressly addressed to them? The next inference is, that the *people*, thus cautioned, must have had the scriptures, and must have been in the habit of reading them, else what meaning is there in the caution to *beware* and to take



warning by the example of the unlearned ? If the scriptures had been withheld from them as they are now from the people, they would have needed no such caution, neither would the unlearned and unstable have had an opportunity of wresting them to their destruction. So much for that famous passage so confidently relied on by papists in support of their prohibition.

We now come to examine the testimony of the *Fathers*; And here, before we begin, it may be well to observe that the Fathers have been forced through the *Expurgatory mill*; and there is now an edition, in which they all speak one voice as nearly as possible, and from which every thing is expunged that is at all offensive to *Romish sensibility*.

By this *index expurgatorious* those sentences in the writings of the Fathers, which favor the general reading of the scriptures, are carefully blotted out, “lest they puzzle young students and confirm the heretics.” The expressions of Athanasius that the Holy Scriptures are to be known of the common people and the magistrates, and that the Holy Scriptures are so plain that any one may understand them, are all erased. Also in Chrysostom, when he says the scriptures are to be read of all; the scriptures contain all things necessary, &c. these are all blotted out. The other editions are in the catalogue of books, prohibited by the council of Trent.

Origen, of the third century, though his father was a layman, knew the scriptures from a child. His father, whose name was *Leonidas*, set him to studying the scriptures, before any thing else; and so anxious was he that his son should be thoroughly acquainted with them, that he daily assigned him a portion of them, as a task to commit to memory,\* and he must have been a child at this time, for he was not *seventeen* years of age, when

\* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. c. 2.

his father suffered martyrdom. In those days, therefore, laymen not only read the scriptures, but even taught them to their children. And Origen himself thus writes "We beseech you not to content yourselves to hear the word of God when read in the church, but to apply yourselves to it at home, and to meditate upon it day and night. Christ has commanded us to meditate in the Law of the Lord, when we walk by the way, and when we sit in our houses, when we lie down and when we rise up."\*

Irenæus says, that "all the scriptures both of the prophets, and of the gospels, may be alike heard of all men."†

Chrysostom says, "the reading of the scriptures is more necessary for laymen than for monks."‡ Again he says, "the people ought, as soon as they come home from the church, to turn over the holy books, and to call their wives and children together to the conference of those things which are said."§ Again he says, "Hear, I pray you, all ye laymen, provide you Bibles, which is the medicine of the soul. If you will nothing else, at least, get the New Testament, the Apostles, the Acts, and the Gospels."|| Let priests *now* make such a speech from the pulpit, and what would be the consequence?

Augustine says to his hearers, "It may not suffice that you hear the divine scriptures read in the churches, but in your houses, either read them yourselves or get others to read, and do you readily hearken to them. If any be so employed, that before his repast he cannot have liesure, let it not grieve him to read something of them at his meal."¶

\* See his hom. 9 in Livit.

† See Iren. lib. II. c. 55.

‡ See Chrys. com. Matt. hom. 2.

§ Ibid. hom. 5.

|| See Chrys. in Epi. ad Coloss. Hom. 9.

¶ See Aug. De Tempore serm. 55, 56, 57. De Sanctis serm.

In the writings of Cyril of Alexandria against Julian the apostate, we find that in his time it was the practice not only to read the scriptures, but also to train up their children in the knowledge of them; and this general and promiscuous reading of the holy scriptures was ridiculed and objected to by Julian; (surely the Romanists keep good company in their objections to this practice!) and Cyril labours to refute his objections by showing what great advantages arose from the practice, above all that could be expected from the learning of the Greeks.\* We will now go back a little to the testimony of Chrysostom and give his most pointed and striking expressions on this point. In his 49th hom. c. 24. on Matt. he says, "But wherefore ought *all* Christians at this time to have recourse to the scriptures?" This is the question so often put by Romanists. Hear the answer of this eloquent Father; "Because," says he, "at this time, *since heresy has infected the church*, the divine *scriptures only can afford* a proof of genuine christianity." A little further on he continues, "But at the present, (i. e. during the rage of heresy) *there is no other method left* to those who are willing to discover the true church of Christ, but by the scriptures only." What can be more pointed and explicit than this? Romanists are continually complaining, and would fain make us believe that the reading of the scriptures breeds heresy: here Chrysostom says it is the *only way* to prevent it: he lets the inquisition have no share in the honour of stopping heresy; he expressly declares also that it is by the *scriptures alone* that the true church can be discovered. Romanists now have traditions which they produce as evidence that theirs is the *only true church*. Are not they and this father at variance, one declaring *scripture to be the only method*, the other

\* See his work *contra. Julianum*. lib. 7.

*denying it?* Again he says,\* “It is absurd while we will not trust other people in pecuniary matters, but choose to count and calculate our money ourselves, that in affairs of much greater consequence, we should *implicitly follow the opinions of others*, especially as we are possessed of the most exact and perfect rule and measure by which we may regulate our several inquiries, I mean the regulations of the divine laws: wherefore I could wish that *all of you would neglect what this or that man asserts for truth, and that you would investigate all these things in the scriptures.*” What can be stronger against the practice of withholding the scriptures, than this? Enough, we think, has now been said from the Fathers to show that they did not approve of, nor practice, the withholding of the scriptures from the common people and the “unlearned vulgar,” as they have been called. Witnesses of every century for twelve hundred years might be adduced to prove the same thing: and the Synod of Tholouse, in the year 1228, was the first to prohibit the reading of the scriptures: Their decree is in these words: “We forbid that laymen be permitted to have the books of the Old and New Testament, unless perhaps some out of devotion, desire to have the Psalter or Breviary for divine offices, and the hours of the blessed Virgin; but even those now mentioned, they *may not have translated in the vulgar tongue.*” This decree was occasioned by the preaching of the Waldenses, who taught that the holy scriptures were the only rule by which men were to judge of articles of faith: and that whatever was not agreeable to the word of God ought to be rejected. They agreed with Chrysostom (before quoted) in this respect.

Wickliff, who was the “*morning star of the reformation,*” was fully impressed with the impropriety of with-

\* Hom. 13, in 2 Ep. ad. Cor.

holding the scriptures from the people, and with a zeal fearless and well directed, gave to his countrymen the holy scriptures in their own language, which rendered him obnoxious to the anathemas of the church. We have already had occasion to say that the simple fact, that before the publication of Wickliff's translation, the people were actually destitute of the word of God, added to the severe displeasure of the church which he incurred by that publication, clearly shows that it is a principle of that church to keep the people in as great ignorance of the scriptures as possible. But Wickliff saw the danger, the impiety, the cruelty, the injustice of this principle; he deeply felt for those who were thus permitted, by those who were appointed to feed and guide them, to perish for lack of knowledge, and with pious courage, he endeavoured to supply their spiritual necessities to some extent by giving them the Bible in their own language. His view of the people's right to read the scriptures is strikingly expressed in the following extract. "Wickliff in one place defines the *church* to be the congregation of just men for whom Christ shed his blood. And in others he speaks thus : 'Scripture is the faith of the church, and the more it is known in an orthodox sense, the better; therefore as secular men ought to know the faith, the divine word is to be taught them in whatever language is best known to them. The truth of the faith is clearer and more exact in the scripture, than the priests know how to express it; and if one may say so, there are many prelates who are ignorant of scripture, and others who conceal things contained it. It seems useful therefore that the faithful should themselves search and discover the sense of the faith, by having the scriptures in a language which they know and understand. Christ and his apostles converted men, by making known to them the scriptures



in that language which was familiar to them. Why then ought not the modern disciples of Christ to collect fragments from the loaf; and, as they did, clearly open the scriptures to the people, that they may know them? The apostle teaches, that we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and be answerable for all the goods entrusted to us; it is necessary therefore the faithful should know these goods and the use of them, that they may give a proper answer. For the answer by a prelate or an attorney will not *then* avail, but every one *must* answer in his *own* person.\*

In this manner did our zealous reformer argue for the propriety of a translation of the Bible into the English language.†

Let us now consider some of the objections that are usually raised against the promiscuous reading of the scriptures. And here two things are to be noticed: 1st. If the Romanists do not *prohibit* the general reading of the scriptures, whence come the objections, we are about to consider? 2d. It will be, perhaps, said that these objections are not to the reading, so much as to the abuse of the scriptures: that is, the mischiefs do not arise so much from promiscuous reading as from the abuse which is occasioned by such reading.

But all the *mischief* is the *very abuse itself*, and if promiscuous reading will always occasion this abuse, the objection must and ought to be to the promiscuous reading: for if the abuse always follows the promiscuous reading, the danger is the same from both, and not more from one than the other. Therefore to remedy the abuse is to prohibit promiscuous reading, which is the very thing they have done as we have before shown. It is mere quibbling, therefore to say that the objection is not

\* Great Sentence.—Spec. Secul.—Doctr. Christ.

† Milner's Church Hist. vol. iv. p. 398.

to the *promiscuous reading* but to the *abuse* of it. But pray, by whom is the Bible most abused? by the honest layman who takes it as the man of his counsel? or the Romanist who regards it as the most dangerous book that can be put into the hands of the common people! It is a good antidote, they admit, and intended to counteract the poison of sin by which our race is infected, but if all were permitted to take it (although it is prepared by God himself,) it would prove a poison to ninety-nine one hundredths of the people! What kind of medicine is this that will kill *one hundred* where it cures *one*, of those who take it? This, to be sure, is a great compliment to pay to the word of God, which should dwell in us richly, and which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path!

One reason urged by papists why the scriptures should not be promiscuously read, is their great obscurity. It is on this account, they contend, that there exists so much diversity among those who read the scriptures and judge for themselves. But it is evident to any one who will examine the subject that the greatest diversities are about the plainest texts. For instance, after Christ had blessed the wine at the supper with his disciples, he called it the *fruit of the vine*, "I will not henceforth drink of *this fruit* of the vine, &c." But papists will not understand this text as we do, although it is so plain. Christ calls it the fruit of the vine, but they will interpret it to mean his own blood. They will have it, that it was his own real blood that he held in the cup. But surely the text is plain enough. So also when he says "drink ye *all* of it." They will not understand it to mean all, but only a part: so also in 1 Cor. xi. 26, Christ calls the bread by this name after he had consecrated it, "for as often as ye eat *this bread*, &c." But papists will understand him to mean his own *body*!

They will believe that he held his own body in his hand, and though he called it bread, yet he meant his body!! Now is this perversion, this gross perversion of language and sense to be attributed to the obscurity of text? Is it not as plain as "In the beginning was the word and the word was God"? And with what face can papists accuse Socinians of perverting the plainest texts of scripture? Is not the perversion of one as gross as that of the other? But the Fathers did not think the scriptures were so obscure. Chrysostom says, "all things necessary are manifest."\*

"There is no man," says Augustine† "but may draw thence (from the scriptures) that which is sufficient for him, provided he comes devoutly and piously affected as true religion requires." Pope Gregory‡ says, "the little children and the men of full stature, the strong *and the weak do there* (in the scripture) find that living water that springs up even to Heaven. It offers itself to *all* and it *suits* itself to *all*. It hath a *simplicity* that *abases itself to the most simple souls* and a height that exercises and raises the most lofty." In Isaiah xxxv. 8. It is expressly declared, the way of holiness the unclean shall not pass over; and that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Chrysostom assigns a very different cause of heresy from the obscurity of scripture. He says, "*the ignorance of the scripture* is a great precipice and a deep pit. *It is this that hath brought forth heresies.* This that has brought in corrupt life;"§ and instead of prohibiting the people to read the scriptures, he expressly tells them "to go *often* over the *dark and unknown* passages, and if thou canst not by *continual reading* find out what is said, go to thy

\* See Hom. 3. in 2. ad Thess. † De utilitate cred. c. 6.

‡ As he is quoted by the authors of the preface to the Mons. Testament p. 9.

§ See Chrys. de Lazaro, serm. 3 Tom. v. p. 145.

teacher, if he shall not teach thee, God will.”\* Here the people are exhorted to study diligently, to *go often* over and to *read continually* those very passages which are dark and obscure. But is this the plan adopted by papists? No, they will not permit the people to read them at all; and so far from endeavouring to ascertain the meaning themselves before they apply for instruction to their teachers, they regard it presumption to attempt such a thing, and should the private investigation result in an interpretation different from that of the church, the offender is liable to be punished at the Bishop’s pleasure by order of the Council of Trent.

If the Scriptures be so unintelligible, did Christ and his Apostles speak intelligibly to the people or not? If not, how came so many to be pricked to the heart and converted? Is it not impious to charge obscurity on the verbal communications of God, which he intended the people should understand? They may not have comprehended the mysteries which he spoke; But they understood plain facts as he related them: For instance, Nicodemus understood Christ to say he must be born again: he understood the fact that there was a *necessity* of being born again, but he did not comprehend the nature of that birth, or see the reason of its necessity. Christ has not explained the mode of conversion; and the reason of its necessity can only be seen by the renewed mind. Therefore Nicodemus understood neither—but yet it pleased Christ to preach to him the doctrine of the new birth. Its obscurity was no reason why it should be withheld. Our Saviour, therefore, spoke with sufficient clearness and intelligibleness to Nicodemus, and so did all the Apostles to all their hearers; and if so, why is their language more unintelligible and obscure when reduced to writing, than when

\* Ibid p. 244—45.

delivered verbally? If Christ and his Apostles could only be understood by a chosen few, why did they speak to all that would hear them? why did they preach promiscuously to *all*, and yet the very same words, when reduced to writing, and when a far better opportunity of studying, at leisure, their full import, is afforded, must not be read promiscuously by all, because, on account of their great obscurity, they can not be understood by all? The cause of misapprehension, therefore, can not be the ignorance or the weakness of the people, else these doctrines never would have been preached to them promiscuously, as we have shown they were. But the cause must be in the inherent obscurity of the scriptures themselves; and if the Scriptures themselves be so unintelligible, how does the church come to understand them? If it is only by human means, together with the ordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost, why is the knowledge of them confined to the clergy? Has not every humble and devout reader of the sacred word the same assistance? But if the church (by which is to be understood the clergy) have extraordinary divine assistance, she must at least have the *inspiration of superintendence*, for between this, and the ordinary influences of the spirit there is no medium. Now if they have this inspiration, I see no use for the Scriptures at all, for God could make his revelations to the church without a written rule as well as with one.

But how are we to be assured that the church expounds by inspiration, or by this supernatural guidance? The Apostle tells us not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits. But how shall we try the church of Rome? There are but two ways, by *miracle* or by *scripture*. The church of Rome does indeed profess to work miracles, but unfortunately they never convince any but those who would believe her dogmas without miracles,



or any other kind of proof. With this engine also, says the learned and pious Calvin, the simplicity of the vulgar was assailed by the *Donatists, who abounded in miracles*. We therefore give the same answer now to our adversaries (the Papists) as Augustine gave to the Donatists, that our Lord has cautioned us against these *miracle-mongers* by his prediction, that there should arise false prophets, who by various signs and lying wonders, should “deceive, if possible the very elect.” And Paul has told us that the kingdom of anti-christ would be “with all power, and signs and lying wonders.” But these miracles they say, are wrought, not by idols, or sorcerers, or false prophets, but by Saints, as if we were ignorant, that it is a stratagem of Satan to transform himself into an angel of light. What shall we say then, but that it has been, and ever will be, the most righteous vengeance of God, to “send those who receive not the love of the truth, strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.”\*

But if the church of Rome does really work miracles, let them be wrought openly and not in a corner, and let these miracles appeal for conviction and confirmation to the *senses of men*, as did every miracle wrought by our Lord or his Apostles. For surely that miracle can prove nothing, that carries with it no evidence of its own existence, such as *transubstantiation*: we must believe *without evidence* that this is a miracle, before it can be used as proof of any thing else: But *how are* we to know that the elements are changed? Our senses do not tell us, but plainly contradict it: what evidence therefore have we but the church’s own word? The miracle is mentioned as proof that what the church says is true: But the whole evidence of the miracle depends upon what it was intended to prove, namely, the truth of the

\* Calvin’s Inst. ded. p. 15.

church. The miracle therefore proves the church, and the church, to return the favor, 'proves the miracle.' We must try the church of Rome by more evident miracles than this; and if she decline the attestation of her dogmas by miracles, Scripture is the only rule left by which to judge of her pretences to supernatural guidance and assistance. If she agree to be thus tried, then there is a way of understanding the scriptures without this extraordinary assistance: For we must not admit the use and authority of the church's inspiration in the interpretation of texts, when the proof of that inspiration is the thing we are in search of, and which depends upon that interpretation. For if we must understand the scriptures by inspiration, and inspiration by the scriptures, we at once get into a circle of false reasoning; and it is really in this circle that papists are constantly whirled round: while attempting to prove from scripture that the Romish Church is the *true* church. For if the true church is to be known only from the scriptures, and the scriptures are unintelligible till the church expounds them; then the church is to be known by the scriptures and the scriptures by the church. To know the church we must *first* understand the scriptures; and to understand the scriptures we must *first* know the church: So that both must be *first* known or we can not understand either.

This leads us to the consideration of another objection to the promiscuous reading of the scriptures; namely, that it makes *private reason the rule of Scripture*.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PROPRIETY OF WITHHOLDING THE SCRIPTURES CONTINUED.

“From a child thou hast known the Scriptures.”

*Paul to Timothy.*

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”

*Paul.*

“I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.”

*Paul.*

“These (the Bereans) were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

*Acts xvii. 11.*

Another objection urged by papists, to the promiscuous reading of the Scriptures is, that “*It makes private reason the rule of Scripture.*” It was on this account that the Council of Trent decreed that no man presume to interpret Scripture contrary to the sense of the church and the unanimous consent of the Fathers. But what is meant by judging of Scripture by private reason? Is it not to use our reason and judgment and capacity of every kind, with what helps we can get, in ascertaining the true will of God as contained in his written revelation? And is this forbidden by God? Is it not expressly enjoined as a duty? In Isaiah v. 3. does he not make the people the judge of his righteous and merciful dealing? “and now O Inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, *judge*, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard, &c.” Is not here a direct appeal to private reason? Again in Acts iv. 19. when Peter and John were commanded by the Jewish Council to refrain from preaching, they answered and said unto them “whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, *judge ye.*” Is not here ano-

ther direct appeal to private reason? Did Pope Peter issue a bull of excommunication against the whole Sanhedrim for presuming to judge whether what he taught was contrary to, or in accordance with the Scriptures? Does he not here call upon *them to judge?* also our Saviour addressing the multitude, and telling them that they could judge of the signs of the weather and discern the face of the sky and of the earth, says, “yea, and why *even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?*”<sup>\*</sup> This is plain, pointed and easy to be understood.

Again, Paul, after giving the Corinthians an exhortation says,† “I speak as to wise men, *judge ye what I say.*” How could they judge what he said without the use of private reason? In John (x. 37, 38.) our Saviour makes as direct an appeal to the private judgment of the people as could possibly be made. “If” says he, “I do not the works of my father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, &c.” now I appeal to every man’s good sense, if Christ does not here leave it to the private reason of every one to judge whether or not he did the works of his Father. He does not roundly and positively and dogmatically assert that he did his Father’s works, but appealing to private reason and private judgment, he says, “if I do not, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works which you see me do.” What can be plainer than this? and indeed the greater part of our Saviour’s discourses are by way of reference or appeal to private reason. We often find him, as well as the Apostles, speaking interrogatively; which would be ridiculous if the persons addressed were not to exercise their own private reason. It is on this account that interrogation is sometimes the strongest affirmation. It is a confident appeal to private reason; so confident is the speaker or writer

<sup>\*</sup>Luke xii. 57.      <sup>†</sup>1 Cor. x. 15.

of the truth of what he says, that he is willing to suspend the decision upon the private judgment of his hearers or readers. What were all the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles but so many appeals to private reason and judgment? Although inspired and divinely commissioned, yet they condescended to prove their divine commission; they used no physical force, demanded no blind belief, asked no sacrifice of private reason; but conscious of supporting truth they appealed to every man's conscience and judgment. They required no belief, where there was not sufficient evidence. In a word their whole testimony from beginning to end, was one continued appeal to private reason and judgment; they appeal constantly to the Law and to the testimony, and was not this admitting the right of the people to exercise their private reason in judging whether what they preached accorded with Holy Writ or not? Otherwise, what sense was there in appealing to Scripture? In what other way can rational conviction be effected? When papists are endeavouring to win proselytes, do they not use arguments calculated to affect and bias private judgment? Do they not use Scripture in the same way? and is not the true interpretation of the texts which they quote, referred to private reason and judgment? Surely they would not pretend to make a protestant believe as they do, whether he will or not. No, papists every day act upon the very principle which they condemn. When they undertake to defend the decrees of their Councils by quoting Scripture, is it not an appeal to private reason? To be consistent, they should never deign to argue a point of faith. If the church has settled it, that is sufficient; private reason has nothing to do with it. If the people will not submit and believe, they must be punished; all attempt to convince them that it is true, is making private reason the rule of Scripture; and every ex-



ercise of judgment in matters of faith, is rebellion against the church.

The truth is that every man who joins the Roman Church without exercising his private reason and judgment, acts like a machine and not like a rational and accountable being. He takes up his belief upon trust, and is lead through his religion by the hand without seeing where he is, or whither he is going. If he be asked a reason of his faith, never having exercised his reason, he has none to give; he believes he is right because the church says so; and he believes the church says what is right, because she says she does. So that he is completely blind-folded. He dare not, under a heavy penalty, believe differently from the church, even though he be convinced she is wrong. When a text of Scripture is quoted as containing a certain doctrine, though there be no more connexion between them, than between purgatory and "in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth" (and between many of their doctrines and their Scripture support, there is not half as much,) yet he is bound to believe that the doctrine is taught in the text quoted. He *dare not* believe otherwise. But it has been said that a man must use his private reason in ascertaining which is the true church, but having once found it, he must then take the sense of Scripture upon the church's word. But is it credible, that God would enable a man to make a correct judgment in the most fundamental and important matter of all, viz. to discern the true religion and the true church from the false, for no other end, but to enable him to choose once for all to whom he should resign and enslave his judgment for ever afterwards? Would it not be just as reasonable to say, that God had given a man eyes, for no other end, but to look out once for all, and select some discreet person to lead him about blind-fold

all the days of his life? Besides, a man must judge of the sense of Scripture, before he can know which is the true church, for that can only be known by her doctrines, and their accordance with Scripture; a man therefore must know what the doctrine of a church is, before he can know it to be a true church. But he must know the sense of Scripture before he can know what are its doctrines, he must therefore know the sense of Scripture before he can know the true church. What degree of credit and authority should be given to a guide, and what not, in this matter, will appear from the following plain and familiar case stated by Archbishop Tillotson, “Suppose I came a Stranger into *England*, and landing at *Dover*, took a Guide there to conduct me in my way to *York*, which I knew before by the *Map* to lie *North* of *Dover*: Having committed myself to him, if he led me for two or three days together out of any plain Road, and many times over Hedge and Ditch, I cannot but think it strange, that in a civil and well-inhabited Country there should be no highways from one part of it to another: Yet thus far I submit to him, though not without some regret and impatience. But then if after this, for two or three days more he lead me directly *South*, and with my Face full upon the Sun at noonday, and at last bring me back again to *Dover* *Pere*; and still bid me follow him: Then certainly no Modesty does oblige a Man not to dispute with his Guide, and to tell him surely that can be no way, because it is *Sea*. Now though he set never so bold a Face upon the matter, and tell me with all the gravity and authority in the World, That it is not *the Sea* but *Dry Land* under the *species* and *appearance* of *Water*; and that whatever my Eyes tell me, having once committed myself to his guidance, I must not trust my own Senses in the case; it being one of the most dangerous sorts of Infidelity for a Man to believe his own

Eyes rather than his *faithful* and *infallible Guide*: All this moves me not; But I begin to expostulate roundly with him, and to let him understand that if I must not believe what I see, he is like to be of no farther use to me; because I shall not be able, at this rate, to know whether I have a Guide, and whether I follow him or not. In short, I tell him plainly, that when I took him for my Guide, I did not take him to tell me the difference between *North* and *South*, between a *Hedge* and a *Highway*, between *Sea* and *dry Land*; all this I knew before, as well as he or any Man else could tell me; but I took him to conduct and direct me the nearest way to *York*. And therefore after all his impertinent Talk, after all his Motives of Credibility to persuade me to believe him, and all his confident *Sayings*, which he gravely calls *Demonstrations*, I stand stily upon the shore, and leave my learned and reverend Guide to take his own course, and to dispose of himself as he pleaseth; but firmly resolved not to follow him. And is any Man to be blamed that breaks with his Guide upon these Terms?

And this is truly the case, when a man commits himself to the guidance of any person or church: If by virtue of this authority they will needs persuade me out of my senses, and not to believe *what I see*, but *what they say*, that *Virtue is Vice*, and *Vice Virtue*, if they declare them to be so.\* And that because they say they are infallible, I am to receive all their dictates for Oracles, though never so evidently false and absurd in the judgment of all man-

\*We are told by Bellarmine, that if the Pope should err by enjoining vices or forbidding virtues, the church would be bound to believe vices to be good, and virtues evil, unless it would sin against conscience. "Si autem Papa erraret præcipiendo vitia, vel prohibendo virtutes, teneretur Ecclesia credere vitia esse bona; et virtutes malas, nisi vellet contra conscientiam peccare."

*Bell. de Pont. 4. 5.*

kind: In this case there is no way to be rid of these unreasonable people, but to desire of them, since one kindness deserves another, and all Contradictions are alike easy to be believed, that *they* would be pleased to believe that Infidelity is Faith, and that when I absolutely renounce their Authority, I do yield a most perfect submission and obedience to it.”\*

But even granting that when a man knows the true church he must then understand the Scriptures as the church does; yet let me ask *why* must he do so? Is it because he has reason or no reason to do so? Papists will not say he has no reason, for they themselves give reasons why he must; and if it be because he has reason, then he makes his reason the judge of Scripture as well as the protestant. For the difficulty is only removed one step farther back, he has made his private reason the judge of the church, and it is on this account that he is willing for the church to be his judge of scripture. So that in reality he judges scripture by his own private reason and judgment at last. And why do papists believe that there should be an infallible church? Is it not because it is *reasonable* that there should be such a church? If so, does not such a belief rest upon private reason? And if it has been considered reasonable by a council, does not the private reason of every man who believes it, agree with the opinion of the Council? and is it not on this account that he believes it? The reasonableness of the thing is relied on by papists as the strongest proof of the fact, and if so, is not the belief far from being infallible, since it is founded merely on reasons why it should be believed, and not on any infallible proof of infallibility? but more of this when we come to speak of infallibility.

The Council of Trent requires that no private interpretation should differ from the unanimous consent of

\*Tillotson's Works, p. 232.

the Fathers; but before there was any council convened, did not the Fathers interpret scripture according to their own reason and judgment? And, even after Councils had been convened, did they not teach doctrines which the Councils had not settled, according to their own private views of scripture truth? And were the Fathers infallible, so that their private reason must be made the guide of our interpretation? Was their private reason less liable to err than ours? And besides, as many of the Fathers differed among themselves, (for they have been made unanimous only by the index expurgatorius) whose private reason must we follow? "Those holy men," says Calvin, speaking of the Fathers, "were ignorant of many things, frequently at variance with each other, and sometimes even inconsistent with themselves."\* For instance, Origen taught that after long periods of time, the damned shall be released from their torments and restored to a new state of probation;† he also held that souls were condemned to animate mortal bodies, in order to expiate faults they had committed in a previous state of existence;‡ he also held, as is well known, that the true meaning of the sacred writers was to be sought in a mysterious and hidden sense. Now surely no one will pretend to say that all the fathers held these notions. Augustine believed that the eucharist should be administered to infants; but this is not now a doctrine of the church, and if we deemed it necessary we might easily show that all the noise about the unanimous consent of the Fathers is a mere sham, without any foundation in truth.

Here it may be observed, in the language of Archbishop Tillotson, that "this liberty of judging is not so to be understood as to take away the necessity and use

\* Calvin Inst. Déd. p. 16.

† See Buck's Theo. Dic. word Origen,

‡ Ibid.



of guides and teachers in religion. Nor can this be denied to be a reasonable limitation, because the knowledge of *revealed religion* is not a thing born with us, nor ordinarily supernaturally infused into men: but is to be learned as other things are. And if it be to be learned, there must be some to teach and instruct others: and they that will learn must be modest and humble; and in those things, of which they are no competent judges, they must give credit to their teachers, and trust their skill: For instance, every unlearned man is to take it upon the credit of those who are skillful, that the scriptures are truly and faithfully translated; and for the understanding of obscure texts of scripture, and more difficult points in religion, he is to rely upon those whose proper business and employment it is to apply themselves to the understanding of these things. For in these cases every man is not capable of judging himself, and therefore he must necessarily trust others: and in all other things he ought to be modest; and unless it be in plain matters, which every man can judge of, he ought rather to distrust himself than his teacher.

And this respect may be given to a teacher, without either supposing him to be infallible, or making an absolute resignation of my judgment to him. A man may be a very able teacher, (suppose of the mathematics) and fit to have the respect which is due to a teacher, though he be not infallible in those sciences: and because infallibility is not necessary to such a teacher, it is neither necessary nor convenient, that I should absolutely resign up my judgment to him. For though I have reason to credit him, within the compass of his art, in things which I do not know, I am not therefore bound to believe him in things plainly contrary to what I and all mankind do certainly know. For example, if upon pretence of his skill in arithmetic, which I am learning

of him, he should tell me, *that twice two do not make four, but five*, though I believed him to be the best mathematician in the world, yet I cannot believe him in this thing: nor is there reason I should; because I did not come to learn this of him, but knew as much of that before as he or any man else could tell me. The case is the same in matters of religion; in which there are some things so plain, and lie so level to all capacities, that every man is almost equally judge of them.\*

The exercise of private reason is not excluded, even by settling points of faith by a general council. We are to believe the doctrines set forth by councils *for the same reasons* that the councils set them forth, or we are not; if the former, then we make private reason the rule of scripture: For instance, we believe in the eternal God-head of Christ for the same reason that the Fathers assembled in the Nicene Council did; and was not that reason their own *private* judgment? Was it not their own conviction of its truth derived from their own private interpretation of scripture? For what council had previously determined it? If none, then no decree of a council, no interpretation of the church, was the ground of their faith, but their own private views of scripture; for to say that the Nicene Fathers first decreed it, and then believed it, is to talk nonsense. So that if we are to believe doctrines for the same reason that councils set them forth, we must make private reason the rule of scripture. But if not, and we are to believe in the eternal God-head of Christ for other reasons than those for which the Nicene Fathers believed it, then we have at once *two different reasons of faith*, which is absurd. We must, therefore, at last resort to private judgment; and as to the point just mentioned, on what foundation did the belief of the whole Christian church rest, before

\* Tillotson's Works, p. 227.

it was settled by the Nicene Council? The church, as such, had given no interpretation, and had defined no particular faith, and if the private interpretation of scripture was not the foundation, there was none.

There are many points which the church has never undertaken to define and settle, and if I should doubt on some of these points, to whom should I go for the opinion of the church? to what infallible interpreter should I appeal? Councils do not expound scripture, but only define and settle points of faith; and the private reason of doctors and priests applies texts of scripture in support of articles of faith thus defined and settled. Before the first uninspired general council, how was scripture interpreted? by private reason, or by the church? If by the church, in what way? and where is the record of the fact? The truth is, in the early ages of the church, the people had not given up their senses and their souls to be disposed of at the pleasure of priests. Every man as a rational creature, searched the scriptures for himself; so that protestants have now the very same mode of ascertaining and interpreting scripture truth, that the Christian world had in the early ages of the church, or at least before the first uninspired general council: So that making private reason the rule and judge of scripture, is no reason why the Bible should be withheld from the people. It is a solemn obligation resting upon all to search the scriptures; and every objection to the general and promiscuous reading of the scriptures, recoils with great weight, and should with great confusion, upon the objector. To read the scriptures is the people's right, and while papists on the one hand profess to acknowledge and to favour the right, they do on the other hand prevent the free enjoyment of it, whenever and wherever they can. We have

shown it to be a principle of their church to do so, and they are bound to adhere to and practice it.

Let us now notice two texts usually insisted on by papists as authority for withholding the scriptures from the common people, on the ground of obscurity. The first is 2 Peter iii. 16, where the apostle, speaking of Paul, says, “as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction.” But of what is this spoken? of the epistles themselves, or of the doctrines contained in them? Surely of the latter; of what use was the epistle if it could not be understood? One of these very epistles he charges to be read to all the brethren. But if they could not understand what he said, where was the utility of reading it to them? and besides, if it was not for *all to hear*, would he have charged that it be read to *all*? We all grant that there are many doctrines which are hard to be understood, but deny that the apostle’s statement of these doctrines is unintelligible. To say the contrary, is to say that the apostle’s were block-heads. There is a vast difference between a *doctrine* being obscure, and the *statement* of it being obscure.—The instance we mentioned a short time since, will serve to illustrate this: The doctrine of the new birth is unintelligible to carnal minds; but who in his senses could misunderstand our Saviour’s language, “ye must be born again?” Who would ever understand him to say “ye must *not* be born again?” We are told that this new birth is effected by the Holy Spirit through the word: who would understand that this meant it was *not* by the spirit? and *not* by the word?

That the apostle alludes to the doctrines contained in the epistles and not to the epistles themselves, further appears from the original. In the most approved man-

uscripts and copies of the Greek text, "In which are some things, &c. refers to "*these things*" and not to "*his epistles*." The original is *en ois*, which can not refer to *epistolais*, but must refer to *touton*. In some copies the reading is *en ais*, but not in those of the most authority. But admitting that the expression refers to the epistles, yet it does not prove that they should not be read, for we admit that there are in the epistles many things hard to be understood in the sense just explained. That these epistles were read by the unlearned and unstable is certain from the fact that they wrested them to their own destruction; for how could they do this if they never read them? Augustine's authority will not be rejected by papists, and he says, "nothing is darkly spoken in any place which in other places of the scripture is not uttered most plainly."\*

The other text is "Knowing this first that no prophecy of the scriptures is of private interpretation."† But this is nothing to the purpose: all that is here said is that no prophecy of scripture is any man's own private opinion, or an explication of his own mind, but a revelation of the mind of God. It is on this account called in the preceding verse "a more sure word of prophecy," whereunto we do well to take heed. We have not, says he, in the 16th verse, followed cunningly devised fables, &c. for no prophecy of scripture is the mere opinion of a man. The prophets of the Lord did not speak or do any thing of their own mind, as Moses expressly says "I have not done any of the works (nor delivered any of the statutes and ordinances) of my own mind."‡ (But false prophets,) "speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord."§ The scriptures therefore are not the effusions of a man's own private notions,

\* See Aug. De doct. Christ. lib. II. c. 6.

† 2 Peter, i. 20.    ‡ Numbers xvi. 28.    § Jer. xxiii. 16,



but of the mind of God. For, continues the apostle, "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This text therefore has nothing to do with the subject under consideration. It proves the divinity of the scriptures, but not that they should be withheld from the common people. The scriptures are a revelation of God's will and merciful purposes to man, and they are therefore as much the property of the common people as of the priests.

The great objection urged by Romanists to the general reading of the scriptures is that it creates division in the church; for if every man judges for himself, they will all judge differently. But how came there to be so much difference of opinion among the early christians? Did it arise from permitting the scriptures to be read by the multitude? Papists will not allow that, for they contend that "in those better times the people were not so ill and curious of themselves" as to read the Bible.

But papists differ among themselves: almost every schoolman is the head of a sect. Are the points of difference between the Lutherans and Calvinists, as numerous as between the Thomists and the Scotists? Look at the dissensions between the regular and secular priests; look at the controversies between the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Benedictans, the Jesuits, the Jansenists, &c.

\*Thomas Aquinas (sometimes called the "Angelic Doctor,") who lived in the thirteenth, and John Duns Scotus of the fourteenth century, (who acquired the name of the "Subtile Doctor,") became the heads of two powerful sects, called the *Thomists* and the *Scotists*, who were ever disputing about the nature of the divine co-operation with the human will, the measure of divine grace essential to salvation, personal identity, and the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, &c.

look at the difference between the Popes themselves, Gregory I, condemning the title of Universal Bishop as abominable and antichristian, and Boniface III, assuming it in virtue of the grant of Phocas. Look at Innocent I, holding the Eucharist to be necessary for infants,\* and Pius IV, anathematizing all who held such a doctrine.† Look at the opposite decrees of councils on the subject of image worship,‡ and say, do all these divisions arise from the reading of the scriptures by the common people?

Papists also differ among themselves on the Pope's infallibility; his power over princes and his temporal dominion; also on the canon of scripture; the sacrifice of the mass; communion in one kind; and Transubstantiation. As soon as this doctrine was established by the Lateran council the schoolmen started many questions. It was disputed by what means the change in the elements was effected; whether by the benediction of the elements, or by repeating the words, *Hoc est meum corpus*. It was also started, what does "*Hoc*" refer to in these words; whether to the substance, or bread, or body, or meat, or accidents, for it might mean this substance, or this bread, or this body, or this meat, &c. It was then argued whether the elements were annihilated; whether their matter and form being destroyed, their essence remained; or their essence being converted, their existence remained. Then they wrangled about the manner of the change, whether it was material or formal; or a change of the whole substance both matter and form; and if so, whether it was by way of *production* or by *abduction*, &c. &c. &c. Was all this dispute and variety of opinion owing to the reading of the scrip-

\*See Aug. Contr. duas Ep. Pelag. lib. 2. c. 4.

†See conc. Trid. Sess. 21. Can. 4.

‡See Fab. Diff. Rom. p. 41. note.

tures by the common people? It is evident that these dissensions arose among the learned, not among the common people: and the history of the church confirms this observation. For wherever there is a split in any church, it is commenced by men of learning or shrewdness. Why did so many separate from the Romish church before they had the Bible in their own tongue, and of course before they ever read it? It was not by reading, but by following Wickliffe, Luther, Zuinglius, &c. who were *learned men*. The learned clergy, therefore, should not be permitted to read the Bible and the Bishops of Bononia actually advised Julius III, not to permit *any mortal* to read more of the gospel than that little which is contained in the mass!

Another great evil, which is nearly the same as the one just considered, is that the general reading of the scriptures breeds heresy; that is, induces those who read to renounce popery. This, I doubt not is the almost uniform consequence of reading the scriptures, and there is no wonder therefore that the practice should be prohibited by the Romish church. Cardinal Rodolpho Pio de Carpi, said that if the Bible be in the vulgar tongue, all men would become heretics.\* Here we have the *true reason* of the prohibition under consideration. Romanists are afraid to have their doctrines and principles examined in the light of scripture. The general reading of the scriptures would make all men protestants, and therefore, the Bible must not be generally and promiscuously read. Now what does this fact speak, but that the doctrines and practice of the Romish church are *unscriptural*? If they are not, how would the reading of scripture induce any one to renounce them? Do not Romanists condemn themselves by making this objection? Is it not admitting the very thing for which we contend?

\*See Sæve's Hist. of the Coun. of Trent, lib. 5. p. 460.

and that this is the true reason of the prohibition papists themselves have admitted. Shortly after the Reformation, a papist said, that if the people were permitted to read the Bible, they would all go over to the Lutherans. When the excellent, prudent, and public-spirited Swedish prince, GUSTAVUS VASA ERICSON, had determined to introduce the reformation into his kingdom, the first object of his attention was, *the instruction of his people in the sacred doctrines of the Holy Scriptures*, for which purpose he invited into his dominions several learned Germans, and spread abroad through the kingdom, the Swedish translation of the Bible, that had been made by OLUS PETRI.\*

The Bishops assembled at Bononia advised Julius III. not to permit a mortal to read more of the gospel than is contained in the mass, and that he labour with all his might that as little as possible be read in the cities under his dominion: And they assigned this reason, "that as long as the people were satisfied with that little affairs succeeded according to his (the Pope's) wish, but the contrary, when men began to read more. "In brief," continue the Bishops, "this is the book which hath raised the tempests and storms with which we are tossed, and the truth is, if any man shall diligently consider that book, and shall take a view of those things which are done in our churches, he will see that there is a *vast disagreement between them and that our doctrine, is not only altogether different from that, but which is more, is often contrary to it.*"† Of this same opinion was Peter Sutor the Cathusian doctor; "since many things," says he, "are delivered to be observed, *which are not expressly [taught] in the Holy Scriptures*, will not the *unlearned* observing these things, be ready to murmur, complaining that

\*Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. iv. p. 80.

†See Consil. de Stabiliend. Rom. Eccl. Vergerii. Tom. 1. p. 102.

so great burdens are laid upon them, by which their gospel liberty is sorely abridged! And will they *not be easily withdrawn* from observing the Constitutions of the (Romish) church, when they shall see that they *are not contained in the Law of Christ?*”\* This same Peter Sutor says, “the translating of the scriptures into the vulgar tongue is a rash, useless and dangerous thing,” and gives this reason for it, that “the people will be apt to murmur when they see things required as from the Apostles, *which they can not find a word of in scripture.*”†

Andradius, who was the interpreter of the Council of Trent, speaking of the prohibition by the Synod of Thoulouse, says, the taking of it away would be destructive to faith.‡ We are now able to understand Bellarmine when he says, “the people would not only receive no benefit, but would also receive *hurt* by the scriptures.”§ We confess that we are unable to answer the objection now under consideration. It is, we admit, strictly true, that the general reading of the scriptures would induce many, very many to leave the communion of the Romish church, and would prevent any from ever joining it. But for all that, we can not think that the scriptures should be withheld from the common people; for the fault belongs not to the Scriptures, but to the Romish church. Two can not walk together except they be agreed. Now the Pope and the Bible have long been at variance, and I think they will never be reconciled; and this is confessed by the Bishops of Bononia, above mentioned, in their advice to Julius III. They say, “But to confess the truth (which must be kept as a secret) in the time of the Apostles, and for some years after the apostles, there *was no*

\*See his work *De Translat. Bibl.* c. 22. fo. 96.

†Ibid p. 99.

‡See *Andrad. defens. coun. Trid.* lib. 4.

§See *Bell. de verbo. Dei.* lib. II. c. 15.



*mention of the papacy, or the cardinalship, much less were these their doctrines, their laws, their customs, no, nor the empire over the nations that we now obtain. But all ministers of all churches (of the Roman no less than of others) did voluntarily obey Kings and Princes and magistrates.”\** And a little further on, they say, “*certainly we scarce retain in our churches, so much as a shadow of the doctrine and discipline which flourished in the times of the Apostles, but have brought in another quite different from it.*”† These confessions of the Bononia Bishops were intended only for the Pope’s ear, but were afterwards divulged to the world by a distinguished Bishop of that church, who was sent a short time before by the Pope as his legate to reduce the heretics in Germany.‡

We shall conclude this chapter with the following extract from a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Fowler of England on 1. Thess. v. 27, which represents the opposition of the Church of Rome to Christ in a very striking light. “The Lord Jesus Christ commands the people to search the scriptures; the Pope commands not. Christ commands them to search Moses and the Prophets, the old testament; the Pope forbids them to search either old or new. Christ says, “in them ye think ye have eternal life;” the Pope says there is more danger of eternal death. Christ gives this reason, they testify of me; the Pope saith no, they are very dark and obscure, very short and defective, therefore no competent witness. Christ saith; let my word dwell in you richly; the Pope saith no, not dwell, not even in your houses. Christ saith teaching and ad-

\*See Consil. de Stabiliend. Rom. Eccles. Vergerii, Tom. 1. p. 96.

†Ibid p. 97.

‡See Bp. Stratford’s discourse on the necessity of a reformation, chap. III. § 1.

monishing one another; the Pope saith brabbling and perverting one another. Christ saith whatever you do in word or deed, do it according to my word; the Pope saith, do my word, observe our decrees, or else, I will burn you. Christ commands, in my text, that this epistle *be read*; the Pope commands the contrary. Christ saith, *to all the brethren*; the Pope saith no, not to any lord, duke or prince. (Franciscus Encœnas, a learned Spaniard, was near being put to death for presenting the new Testament to the Emperor, Charles V.) Christ saith, I *charge* you *to read*; the Pope saith, I charge you *not to read*. Christ saith, I charge you under my curse; the Pope saith, I charge you *not to do it* under the curse of the church. Christ saith I charge you under the pain of hell fire; the Pope saith, I charge you *do not*, under the pain of hell and the stake too.”\*

\*See “An antidote against Popery,” Mr. Fowler’s sermon.

## CHAPTER VII.

### INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching those things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake,” *Paul.*

As the right to withhold the scriptures from the people is argued from the *Infallibility* of the Romish church, it may be well to bestow on this point a more particular and extended examination. It is contended that as the church is infallible, she cannot err in her judgment as to the propriety of this measure; and moreover, that as she is infallible, her interpretation of scripture is to be implicitly relied on; so that her opinions and her instructions, *ex cathedra*, more than compensate for the withholding of the word itself; and are a safer guide in matters of religion than the Bible can possibly be when placed in the hands of all sorts and classes of people. It is contended that her infallibility secures to all who will confide in her, a greater degree of certainty in this all important matter, than can possibly be obtained when left to the private, though assisted judgment of every one who may choose to search the scriptures for himself. But does infallibility really exist in the church of Rome? The importance of this doctrine to the whole papal system appears from the fact, that in every strait and difficulty into which the fair interpretation of scripture, and the cogency of sound reasoning drive its advocates, they resort to this imposing though presumptuous claim to infallibility; and by its potent spell they cause all difficulties to disappear.—

This is the great bulwark of their whole system, and their conclusive answer to every argument urged against that system; and it is this claim to such high prerogative that imparts a superstitious sanction to dogmas the most unscriptural, unreasonable and absurd. As then it is so important, and indeed essential, to the well being of the church which has arrogated this attribute to itself, and as the possession of such a prerogative would justly demand from us implicit and immediate obedience, it becomes us to give to this claim a candid hearing and a close examination. By the infallibility of the church of Rome is meant that *divine superintendence of all its acts and decrees by which it is preserved from the possibility of error, or mistake.*

But what, *a priori*, staggers our confidence in this doctrine is that the very church which claims and defends it, is yet unsettled as to where this infallibility resides. Some contend that it resides in the pope alone; others in the council alone; others in the pope and council together; and others again, that it resides in the diffusive body of Christians.\* Now from the very nature of the case, it is utterly impossible that this question ever should be settled without another revelation; and not even then, if it required an infallible human tribunal to interpret it. But as the church is now divided on this point, who is to settle it? It must be settled by an infallible authority, before it can demand an implicit belief. Shall the council decide it? the Pope answers, no. Shall the Pope decide it? the council answers, no. Shall both together decide it? If so, the question is settled, for if they can pronounce an infallible decree, they must be already infallible. Their decision must be that infallibility resides with the pope and council together, for if they decide that it resides in

\* Tillotson's works, vol. i. p. 121.

either separately, that decision is not infallible by its own import, and nothing therefore would be infallibly settled by it.

But some may say, that as such a decision would be made up of the opinion of the Pope by himself, of the council by itself, and the decree of both together, it cannot fail of being infallible; but the answer is, that if the decision derives any infallibility from the Pope by himself, or from the council by itself, the question is at once settled. The decision then must be that both together are alone infallible, otherwise the decree would decree its own *fallibility*, and therefore not settle the question. Now before this decree, the Pope and council together were not *certainly* infallible, according to the terms of the case; for the object of the decree was to ascertain and settle that certainty. If then this be the case, how could they issue a *certainly* infallible decree? They plainly could not: so that the question remains still unsettled and must remain so. Now the very fact that it is unsettled, where and in whom this infallibility resides, and that it never can be settled, as we have shown, affords, *a priori*, a strong argument against the claim.

The question we have just stated, namely, where and in whom does infallibility reside, is a question between Papists. But there is another question equally impossible to be decided, which exists between them and us, namely, does the infallibility of which Papists speak, really exist in the church at all? It is plain that neither of these questions can ever be infallibly settled, since the impossibility of such a decision is involved in the questions.

It is absolutely impossible, therefore, that any church should be certainly infallible, while she is the sole judge and interpreter of the very charter from which the claim is derived; and this accounts for the diversity of opinion



among papists themselves on this point. Our meaning is this, that so long as any body is the sole organ through which alone any interpretation of the scriptures can reach the people with a claim to belief, it is impossible that that body can make out a fair pretension to infallibility on the ground of scripture. The thing is demonstrably impossible, as we shall hereafter attempt to show.

There is another difficulty connected with the claim to infallibility, which has never yet been fairly and openly met, and one which we call upon papists to clear up. A church that is infallible, *must be unchangeable*. Now the difficulty lies here; as the doctrine and spirit of the church of Rome is unchangeable, they must admit that the doctrine and spirit of the church in the dark ages (the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries,) is the doctrine and spirit of the church *now*, and was the doctrine and spirit of the *apostolic church*. They must admit that what the church now is in Spain and South America, and what it ever has been in Italy, is not only the same as in the days of the apostles, but also the same as she *now is in this country*. Are the advocates of infallibility prepared to admit this? But we will not stop here: An infallible church is bound, and if consistent, is willing, to sanction and make herself now responsible for all her regularly authorised acts and decrees from the earliest periods of her existence to the present time.— They are bound to say that when the council of Constance condemned to the stake John Huss and Jerome of Prague, they did what the apostles would have done in similar circumstances; and what a Romish council would *now* do in similar circumstances: They must make the act their own, or else they must condemn it, and say they did wrong. Let them publicly and formally condemn that act of the council of Constance, and all the decrees of condemnation to the stake, of all the councils; or their

silence must be construed into a sanction of such conduct, and of the principles which prompted it. Here, then, they are in this dilemma; either they must sanction and confirm these decrees, or else give up her claim to infallibility. Bellarmine, who is of the highest authority in the church of Rome, says that "heretics ought to be exterminated root and branch from the earth; but where the number of papists is so small that they cannot safely attempt it, there they are to be quiet," and on this principle the church has acted. Look at their treatment of the poor; unoffending and pious Waldenses; look at the massacre in Paris in the time of Gregory 13th. Look at the horrible and bloody persecution which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. Look at the Inquisition and all its tortures. Read the narrations of Romish cruelty in Limborch's history; narrations that chill the blood and sicken the heart of him who can feel a pang of sympathy for the sorrows and woes of others.—Look at all these, and ask the church to sanction them; call upon papists to confirm or condemn them; bring them to the point; let the church acknowledge she did wrong; let her condemn these transactions, and we will no longer make use of them as arguments against her infallibility, for then none will be needed. Is the church prepared *now* to sanction and mother all the abominations, and corruptions, and superstitions, and massacres, which she once sanctioned? If so, let her do it; if not, where is her infallibility?

Another objection to the claim of infallibility is derived from history. It is that inconsistent doctrines have been taught by the same church. They *once* held doctrines which they *now* disavow; and they *now* hold doctrines which they *once* did not hold. Papists are artful in concealing their real doctrines; they are aware that to admit that the church was once corrupt or wrong, would be to

destroy her infallibility. They therefore evade every attack that would bring them out in defence of some of their most absurd doctrines. But history teaches us that some of their most absurd doctrines were once mere matters of opinion and debate. It is plain from history, that the church by *indulgences* professed to pardon the sins of those to whom they were granted, and to save them from purgatory. *Now* they say, that the only effect of indulgences is to save from temporal or ecclesiastical punishment. What was it that first excited the opposition of Luther, but that indulgences were sold, by which the church professed to deliver from purgatory? The promulgation of these indulgences in Germany was committed to Albert, a prelate, who at that very time, held two archbishoprics, namely, of Mentz and of Magdeburg. Albert delegated the office to John Tetzel, a Dominican Inquisitor, who in the year 1517, appeared in the neighbourhood of Wittemberg, selling indulgences.\* Myconius† assures us, says the historian Milner, that he himself heard Tetzel declaim with incredible effrontery, concerning the unlimited power of the Pope, and the efficacy of the indulgences. The people believed that the moment any person had paid the money for the indulgence, he became certain of his

\* According to a book, called the tax book of the Sacred Roman Chancery, containing the exact sums demanded for the remission of sins, we find the following fees.

	s.	d.
For Simony .....	10	6
Sacrilege .....	10	6
Taking a false oath in a criminal case.....	9	0
Robbing .....	12	0
Burning a house.....	12	0
Murdering a layman.....	7	6
Laying violent hands on a clergyman.....	10	6

† Frederick Myconius was a writer of that period.

salvation.\* John Tetzel publicly boasted that he had saved more souls from hell by his indulgences, than St. Peter had converted to Christianity by his preaching—and he assured the purchasers of his indulgences, that their crimes, however enormous, would be forgiven.—He has also publicly declared that “the moment the money tinkles in the chest, your father’s soul mounts up out of purgatory.” It does not appear, says Milner, that the rulers of the hierarchy ever found the least fault with Tetzel as exceeding his commission, till an opposition was openly made to the practice of indulgences; whence it is evident that Protestants have not unjustly censured the corruptions of the court of Rome in this respect.† The following was the usual form of absolution, written by Tetzel’s own hand, viz: “May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion! And I, by his authority, that of his apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most holy Pope granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures in whatever manner they have been incurred; and then from all the sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see: and as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to thee all the punishment which thou deservest in *purgatory* on their account; and I restore thee to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which thou possessed at baptism, so that when thou diest, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the *paradise* of delight shall be opened; and if thou shalt not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when thou art

\* See Milner’s Church Hist. vol. iv. p. 217. † Ib. p. 218.

at the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.\*†

“Burnet informs us,”† says Milner, “that the scandalous sale of pardons and indulgences had by no means so completely ceased in popish countries as is commonly taken for granted. He says, that in Spain and Portugal there is every where a commissary, who manages the sale with the most infamous circumstances imaginable. In Spain, the king, by an agreement with the Pope, has the profits. In Portugal, the king and the Pope go shares.

“In the year 1709, the privateers of Bristol took a galleon, in which they found five hundred bales of bulls” for indulgences . . . “and sixteen reams were in a bale. So that they reckon the whole came to 3,840,000.—These bulls are imposed on the people, and sold, the lowest at three rials, a little more than twenty-pence, but to some at about eleven pounds of our money . . . All are obliged to buy them in Lent.” The author adds, “Besides the account given of this in the cruising voyage, I have a particular attestation of it by captain Dampier.§”

Such efficacy of indulgences is now disclaimed by papists, at least in this country. How does this difference of sentiment comport with the claim to infallibility?

History furnishes abundant proof that the Pope has claimed and exercised a civil authority over kings and kingdoms: that he is to all intents and purposes a *temporal Prince*; but this is now denied by many papists. The Bishops of Bononia confessed in their advice to Julius III. that, “in the time of the apostles, and for some years after the apostles, there was no mention of the papacy, &c. no, nor the *empire over the nations which*

\* Seckend. p. 14. † Milner’s Church Hist. vol. iv. p. 217.

‡ Vol. iii. intro. p. 20. § Milner’s Ch. Hist. vol. iv. p. 218



*we now obtain.*”\* Whether the official opinion of the bishops of Spain to the British parliament was upon the general question of the Pope’s temporal dominion, or whether it related to his temporal dominion over British subjects, I am not able to say, not having that opinion at hand; the same also in regard to the bishops of Ireland, but it is certain that on this point there is a diversity of sentiment.

The nature and extent of the Pope’s authority have long been matters of debate among the Roman doctors. It is strange and unaccountable, if this office and its powers are of divine institution, that there should be, among those who profess to believe in that divine appointment, so much difference of opinion as to their nature and extent, and that there should be so little clearly settled and unanimously received. It is derogatory to the character of God to suppose that if these institutions of supremacy, power, infallibility, &c. are from him, and are of such vital importance to the church as they are held to be, he would have permitted them to be lost, and to become matters of so much dissension and doubt. “There is,” says Almain, a distinguished divine, who flourished at the close of the fifteenth and at the beginning of the sixteenth century, “so much controversy about the plenitude of ecclesiastical power, and to what things it may extend itself, that *few things in that matter are secure.*”†

The point before us is, and ever has been, a delicate one. And it is a point of unspeakable importance, no less than of serious delicacy, in a free country such as ours, where the church is in no way connected with the state, and where a union of the two is so much to be

\* See Consil. de Stabiliend. Rom. Eccl. Tom. i. p. 96.

† Almain de Aust. Eccle. cap. 3.

abhorred by every good Christian as well as by every sincere friend to his country.

It is clearly ascertained, that many distinguished divines of the highest authority and repute in the Romish church, have ascribed to the Pope, an universal and absolute empire of civil as well as ecclesiastical matters. "The first opinion is," says Bellarmine, "that the Pope has by divine authority the fullest power over the whole world, both in ecclesiastical and civil affairs; thus taught Aug. Triumphus, Alvarus Pelagius, Panormitanus, Hostiensis, Sylvester and many others."\*

This doctrine Baronius often asserts with great confidence; "there can be no doubt of it," says he, "but that the civil principality is subject to the sacerdotal."† Again he says, "that God hath made the political government subject to the dominion of the spiritual church."‡ This same Baronius, in another place, tells us that "they are all branded for heretics, who take from the church of Rome, and the See of St. Peter, one of the two swords, and allow only the spiritual."||

The opinion which Bellarmine gives as the common opinion of Roman Catholics, though it does not directly and immediately ascribe temporal power to the Pope, nevertheless is, that in virtue of his spiritual

\* Prima sententia est, summum Pontificem jure divino habere plenissimam potestatem in universum orbem terrarum, *tam in rebus Ecclesiasticis quam Civilibus*. Ita docent Aug. Triumphus, Alvarus Pelagius, Panormitanus, Hostiensis, Sylvester et alii non pauci. Bell. lib. v. 1.

† Politicum principatum sacerdotali esse subjectum, nulla potest esse dubitatio. An. 57 §23.

‡ Politicum imperium subjecit spiritualis Ecclesiæ dominio. Ib. §32.

|| Hæresis errore notantur omnes qui ab Ecclesia Rom. Cathedra Petri è duobus alterum gladium auferunt, nec nisi spiritalem concedunt. Baron. Anno. 1053. §14.

power, he has supreme power even in temporal matters.\* Another evidence that the Pope has claimed supreme dominion in temporal matters, is, that he has *exercised* it. The bull of Pope Sixtus V. issued in 1585, against Henry, king of Navarre, and the prince of Conde, begins thus: "The authority given to St. Peter, *and his successors*, &c. excels all the powers of earthly kings and princes. \* \* \* \* and if it find any of them resisting God's ordinance, it takes more severe vengeance of them, *casting them down from their thrones*," &c. The bull then proceeds: "we deprive them (Henry and the prince of Conde) and their posterity forever of their dominions and kingdoms." The bull then goes on to absolve their subjects *from* the oath of allegiance, and from all fealty and obedience; and forbids them to obey them or any of their admonitions or laws.

The Bull of Pope Pius V. issued in 1570, against Queen Elizabeth, and which we have already quoted in the third chapter, after declaring that there is no salvation out of the Holy Catholic (Roman) church, and that Jesus Christ has constituted the Pope of Rome *prince over all nations and all kingdoms*, that he might *pluck up, destroy, dissipate, ruin, plant and build*, proceeds thus: "He (the Pope) thereby *deprives the queen* of her pretended right *to the kingdom*, and of *all dominion, dignity and privilege whatsoever*; and *absolves* all the nobles, subjects and people of the kingdom, and whoever else have sworn to her, from their oaths, and all duty whatsoever in regard of dominion, fidelity and obedience." After this bull, the Pope should not object to

\* *Tertia sententia media, et Catholicorum communis, Pontificem ut Pontificem non habere directè et immediatè ullam temporalem potestatem, sed solùm spiritualem, tamen ratione spiritualis habere saltem indirectè potestatem quandam, eamque summam in temporalibus.* Bell. lib. v. 1.

being called, what he has been thus *officially styled*, neither should papists object to his being so called, viz: "*Prince over all nations and all kingdoms.*"

Pope Clement VI. in the year 1346, attempted to depose Lewis IV. Pope Clement V. in the great synod of Vienna, in 1311, declared the emperor subject to him. Boniface VIII. in a decree extant in the canon law, declared that "the temporal authority must be subject to the spiritual power;" and it is thus he interprets the two swords spoken of in Luke xxii. 38, "for one sword," says he, "must be under another."\* He then adds, "whence if the earthly power go astray, it must be judged by the spiritual power."†

By consulting Barrow's introduction to his "Treatise on the Pope's supremacy," any one will be satisfied by the long list of Popes there given, who held and practised this doctrine, that it *was*, and if she be infallible, *is now* the doctrine of the Romish church. He there tells us, and gives his authority, that Boniface VIII. openly declared himself to be "*king of kings, monarch of the world, and sole lord and governor, both in spirituals and temporals.*"

Pope Innocent IV. held the same doctrine. Innocent III. applied to the Pope the tenth verse of the first chapter of Jeremiah. "See, I have this day, set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant." This Pope also practised this doctrine by deposing the emperor Otho IV. In the year 1099, Pope Paschall II. deprived Henry IV. and

\* Oportet gladium esse sub gladio et temporalem auctoritatem spirituali subjici potestati. Extrav. Com. lib. i. tit. 8, cap. 1.

† Ergo si deviat terrena potestas, judicabitur à potestate spirituali. Ibid. (See Barrows works, vol. i. p. 540, 541.)

excited enemies to persecute him.\* Pope Urban II. preached the same doctrine, and recommended it in his decrees.† As for Gregory VII. he is *honored* with being called the *great apostle*, if not the author of this doctrine; he boldly deposed from royalty one of the Henry's of England, in virtue of authority delegated by Jesus Christ, to take away and give empires and kingdoms, and whatever mortals can have. Barrow has quoted his express words, and given authorities at length.‡

The church of Liege, in their answer to the epistle of Pope Paschall, says that *Pope Hildebrand* is the author of this doctrine; he and Gregory II. therefore must share the *honour*. Here we perceive that part of the church at least, did not believe that Jesus Christ was the author of this doctrine; but that it since became the doctrine of the church, has been, I think, clearly shown. But there is more evidence still on this point. Leo IX. § Stephanus VI. ¶ Pope John VIII. ¶ Nicolas I.\*\* and Gregory II.†† all held and many of them practised this doctrine.

But I may be told by those who can speak, and affect to think, lightly of the opinions of Popes, when it suits their purpose, that their opinion and practice in this matter, are not to be regarded as the doctrine and practice of the church. But what do Romanists call the church? Is it a council? Is it what the Council of Trent has called the church? If so, we have ample testimony from this source. The great Lateran Council, held un-

\* See Pope Paschall, Ep. 7. † See Pope Urban II. Ep. 12.

‡ See his works, vol. i. p. 542.

§ Pope Leo IX. Ep. i. c. 12. § Stephanus VI. Ep. 1. (Baron. Anno, 885. §11.)

¶ John VIII. Ep. 119. \*\* Pope Nicolas I. Ep. 4.

†† Baron. Anno, 730. §40.



der Innocent III. did ordain that "if a temporal lord, being required and admonished by the church, should neglect to purge his territory from heretical filth, he should by the metropolitan and other comprovincial bishops, be noosed in the band of excommunication; and that if he should slight to make satisfaction within a year, it should be signified to the Pope, that he might from that time denounce the subjects absolved from their fealty to him, and expose the territory to be seized on by Catholics.\*

This council, according to the Council of Trent, did represent or constitute *the church*.† Here; then, we have an official and formal acknowledgement of this doctrine by THE CHURCH.

From what has been now said, it clearly appears that the church of Rome once held and practiced the doctrine, that the Pope is "Prince over all nations and all kingdoms." If this doctrine is now discarded by the church, in what light does her infallibility appear? If she was infallible when she held the doctrine, she cannot be so now, since she rejects it. Again: If she was infallible when she held and practised this doctrine, she never could have renounced the doctrine, nor changed her practice: but she has done both; therefore she cannot be infallible. Is it denied that she has renounced her doctrine or changed her practice? Suppose the present Pope should issue exactly such a bull against William IV. as Pius V. issued against Elizabeth. Suppose he should issue such a bull against the President and Congress of the United States, as Sixtus V. issued against the king of Navarre and the prince of Conde, (and he has the same right to do so in the one case as

\* Conc. Later. Cap. 3. in Decret. Greg. lib. v. tit. 7. cap. 13.

† Neque enim per Lateranense Concilium. *Ecclesia. Statuit.*  
&c. Syn. Trid. Sess. 14. Cap. 5.

the other, inasmuch as he is “constituted by Jesus Christ prince over all nations,”) what would be the consequence? would it not, in this enlightened day, expose the tyranny, the over-reaching claims, the *inquisitorial* character, and the hidden abominations of the church of Rome? If this church has not discarded the doctrine and changed the practice which we have shown to be once hers, how can a Roman Catholic be an American citizen at heart? How can he be a sincere friend to the principles of our government, which are directly at war with those held and practised by the proper successors of Peter, in the papal chair? I do not lay to Roman Catholics in America, any charge of unfriendly designs against their country, but I do say that the *principles of their church policy*, as held in all countries, and as *avowed* when there was no fear of a successful opposition, are at *irreconcilable variance* with the *genius of our republican institutions*. But in this and other countries, where this doctrine is unpopular and offensive to the spirit and principles of the government, and where they have not the power to put it in practice, it is denied—it is disowned. But this only confirms what Bellarmine, their own oracle, has said, that there was a sort of *heretics* skulking in the church who restrain the Pope’s authority so far as not to allow him any power over sovereign princes in *temporal affairs*, much less any power of depriving them of their kingdoms and principalities.\* Of such Baronius spoke, when he said they were “*branded for heretics*.” Those, therefore, who deny that the Pope is a *temporal prince*, are regarded as rejecting an important part of the papal system. In what light does this “sort of heretics” view the character and orthodoxy of those Popes and those doctors,

\* See Bell. lib. v. 1.

who have both held and practised this doctrine? How can they deny but that false and pernicious doctrines may creep in, and obtain sway in the church, through the interest of the Pope and his adherents? How can the *concord, unity and infallibility* of the church well consist with the denial of this doctrine, so generally held and practised through a long succession of Popes?

The whole church did, for six hundred years, believe in and practice the administering the Eucharist to infants. This was the practice of the whole church in the time of Augustine, and was esteemed by that father as an apostolic tradition.\* *Now* the church, in this country at least, holds no such doctrine and has no such practice. So also the doctrine of the *Millenaries*, which was (as the name imports) that Christ would reign personally 1,000 years. This doctrine was held by the church uncontradicted until the time of Dionysius Alexandrinus, who flourished about the middle of the third century. Papists do not hold this doctrine *now*, though some modern protestants are endeavoring to revive it.

The doctrine of Transubstantiation was not always a doctrine of the Romish church. Before the Lateran council in 1215, it was a mere matter of opinion and debate.† It has been admitted by some papists that it was settled by a council held in Rome in 1050, against Berengarius who had impugned the doctrine. But it matters not at what particular time it was a matter of opinion; that it was so, at least before the last mentioned council is abundantly evident from the testimony of writers, who flourished previous to that time. But the very fact of convening a council to settle the point against Berengarius, shows that it was then unsettled. This doctrine is held

\*Chillingworth ch. 3 § 42.

†See the second subdivision under the first head of Tillotson's sermon on transubstantiation appended to this work.

in the creed of Pope Pius IV, to be a doctrine, without belief in which, there is no salvation. Then how does the infallibility of the church appear in permitting a fundamental doctrine, without which there could be no salvation, to be unsettled as a point of faith for so long a time? for it was not established as a doctrine of the church till the council in 1215. Before this time they must have admitted those to her communion, who at the same time disbelieved in what is now a fundamental doctrine of that church: Yea, their doctors in the bosom of the church denied or doubted it, and were not excommunicated: and why? Because it was not then considered a matter of faith, without which salvation was impossible. Let her doctors now use the same language and express the same doubts concerning this doctrine, as did those who lived before the council of 1050, and the change of sentiment in the church on this head would soon appear by their excommunication. What is here said of Transubstantiation is equally true of *some other points* of their doctrine.

It has been denied by papists, and I suppose would now be denied by all papists in this country, that their church holds the doctrine that faith may be broken with heretics; i. e. all who differ from them in religious opinions. But this doctrine is as clearly taught by the council of Constance as language could make it. The decree of that council on this point is this: that “concerning every safe conduct granted by the Emperor, Kings and other temporal princes to heretics or persons accused of heresy, in hopes of reclaiming them, that it is not to be of any prejudice to the Catholic faith, or Ecclesiastical jurisdiction; not to hinder but that such persons may and ought to be examined, judged and punished according as justice shall require. If those heretics shall refuse

to revoke their errors, although they shall have come to the place of judgment, relying on their safe conduct, and without which they would not have come hither, the persons who have promised them security, *shall not in this case be obliged to keep his promise, by whatsoever tie he may have been engaged* when he has done all that is in his power to do.?" The case of John Huss is an example of this, in which case the council acted upon this very principle, which they have so plainly set forth in the above decree: Huss was required to appear before the council on the charge of heresy. The Emperor Segismund promised to protect him there and back again, and when Huss was condemned, the Emperor told the council that he had pledged his faith for protection to him. The reply of the council was that he had nothing more to do with Huss, he had done all for him that was in his power; and the unfortunate Huss was actually burnt. This was done too by order of the council, and not of the Emperor, for he had nothing more to do with him. This was establishing another doctrine which the Romish church in this country will deny to be theirs; namely, *that the church has the right to inflict corporeal punishment for heresy.*

This decree of the council has never been repealed, and never can be, and must therefore, if the church be infallible, *now and ever* be the doctrine of that church. Are the papists in this country prepared to come forth and defend this decree, and the conduct of the council? If they are, let them do it; for we now charge it upon them as their doctrine, though they dare not avow it, where in the midst of an enlightened people the church is unconnected with the State. And we do also assail the conduct of that council in the affair of Huss and Jerome of Prague. Let them defend it, or surrender their claim to infallibility.



We charge the church of Rome with holding the worship of images; that is, they worship images in the same way that the heathen do. They contend that they do not worship the image, but the deity represented by it. But this is in fact worshipping the image. In the Romish Catechism, authorized by the council of Trent, is the following passage. "The images of Saints are put in churches, as well that *they may be worshipped*, as that we, being admonished by their example, might conform ourselves to their life and manners." Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor, says that "the *same worship* is to be rendered to the image as is due to the being represented." The decree of the council of Trent on this point, a council whose decrees and acts every priest on his induction into the holy office promises to approve and defend; the decree of this council is this, "That the images of Christ and the blessed Virgin, Mother of God, and other Saints, are to be kept and reserved especially in churches, and due honor and veneration to be given to them: not for that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them for which they are to be worshipped, but because the honor which is exhibited in images is referred to the prototype or thing represented by them, so that by the image which we *kiss*, and before which we *kneel*, or put off our hats, we adore Christ and reverence his saints." Now the worship here described, is precisely the same as that which heathen pay to their idols. They worship not the wood or stone, but the *numen* (the deity) supposed to dwell in the idol. Moreover to *kiss* and *kneel* before any thing is expressive of worship, and is so used in scripture. In the 72d Psalm, speaking of God, it is written "yea all kings shall fall down before him;" in the 95th Psalm, it is written "O come and let us worship and bow down and *kneel* before the Lord our maker." We also read of the 7,000 who had not bowed the knee

to Baal. In the 2d Psalm, we are told to *kiss* the son, lest he be angry: and speaking of the 7,000 just mentioned, it is written "and every mouth which hath not *kissed* them," and many other passages which show that such reverence amounts to worship, and is therefore forbidden by the second commandment. The church in this country *now* disclaims the actual worship of images. How all these changes in doctrine and practice can be reconciled with the infallibility of the church, I leave its advocates to find out.

Another source of argument against the claim to infallibility is, the opposite and contradictory decrees of councils and popes. For instance, the Council of Florence, under Pope Eugene, ascribed infallibility to the *pope*, in opposition to the Council of Basil. The decision of the Council of Florence was by its own import not infallible, but if it was sanctioned by the pope, and no doubt it was, as such a decision would be to his advantage, then it became infallible. But the Council of Basil had decreed that infallibility did not reside in the pope. Who then was to settle the question? Why, the very nature of the case precludes the possibility of its ever being settled, as we have before shown. It is, therefore, a matter of debate to this day.

The Council of Constantinople, convoked in 754, unanimously decreed the removal of images, and the abolition of image worship,\* (and this, by the way, shows that it did exist.) But the second Council of Nice, convoked in 787, decreed the re-establishment of image worship, and anathematized all who had concurred in its abolition. Several other councils after this, were alternately decreeing and condemning image worship.† To get rid of this difficulty, the papists say that the in-

\* Fab. diff. Rom. 41.

† Ibid. note.

fallibility of their church is not shaken, unless it can be shown that two general councils, and their respective popes, decreed opposite and contradictory things. Now, as to the second Council of Nice, it is admitted that the Pope concurred in its decisions, and as to the Council of Constantinople, if the then reigning Pope did not concur, yet the sentiment agrees with one of his predecessors, and surely the office being *one* and the *same*, that circumstance can make no difference. Pope Gregory the Great says, “*Omne manufactum adorari non licet: adorari imagines, omnibus modis veta.*”\* Now here is certainly the decree of a council, agreeing with and concurring in that of a pope, condemning image worship. And if this concurrence be not such as to make the decree valid, it must be admitted that the mere fact of Gregory living at the beginning of the seventh century, instead of the middle of the eighth, makes all the vast difference between an infallible and a nugatory decree. But before the advocates of infallibility can thus uncere- moniously nullify the decrees of general councils, where the pope did not concur, they must first demonstrate that the pope has, *jure divino*, a *veto* upon all such decrees. This, we know, is denied by some of the Romish writers; for, as we have before observed, it is a matter of dispute to this day, whether or not a general council is not of itself infallible in its decrees. It is plain then, that this question must be first settled, before the objection can be fairly made that no two councils, with their popes concurring, have decreed opposite and contradictory things. For if this objection be true, let them produce the infallible decree or decision by which it is made so: for if it has ever been decided that the only infallible decree is that of a general council, with the

\* Greg. Magn. Epist. Lib. xi., Ep. 13, aliter 9.

pope concurring, let them produce that decision; and when they produce such a decision, we have another question ready for them, which is, if the great question as to *where* the infallibility resides, has been thus *infallibly settled*, how does it come that there is so much diversity of opinion in the church on that point? Is it at all likely, if this had always been a settled point of faith, that the Council of Florence, under Pope Eugene, would have decreed that the pope alone was infallible?

We remarked in the former part of this discussion, that it was demonstrably impossible for the Romish Church to make out her claim to infallibility from the Scriptures. When the church is asked, how is it known that you are infallible? her reply is, the Scriptures say so: but how am I to know that your interpretation of Scripture is correct, seeing there are so many learned and good men of quite a different opinion? The answer is, that the interpretation of the church is infallible. Here then we see the Scriptures prove the church, and the church proves the meaning of the Scriptures; which is reasoning in a circle. So also when they are asked, how do you know infallibly that the Scriptures are from God? They reply, that the infallible church says so; which is the circle again. This circle argument is an old one, but it is none the worse for that: for if it has stood so long unanswered, it has a far better claim to infallibility than the Romish Church. The only way in which most of the Romish writers attempt to answer this argument, is to throw it upon private reason, and then stand upon the broad ground of Deism. A learned Arch-bishop of our own country,\* however, attempts to answer it in another way; but in getting out of one cir-

\* Archbishop Carroll's Address to Rom. Cath. in America, p. 45, 46.

cle he falls into another. His argument is, that the Catholic church has ever, from the days of the Apostles down to the present time, decided on matters of controversy, and exercised the right of excommunicating; and the exercise of such prerogative, unless the church was infallible, would be vain and nugatory: therefore, *the church is infallible!!* Now, in the first place, the learned Archbishop very illogically argues from matter of fact to matter of right; that because the church did so and so, therefore she had the right to do it. But, in the next place, even this does not mend the matter, for he proves she is infallible because she always exercised the right of deciding controversies and excommunicating; and then turns about and proves that she possessed that right because she is infallible; “for,” says he, “the exercise of such prerogative, without she was infallible, would be vain and nugatory.” He then triumphantly, though I think very *unseasonably*, asks, “where now is the circle of false reasoning?” Had I been at his elbow, I might have replied, “there it is just warm from your own pen.” He then boastingly adds, “Is not infallibility first demonstrated from other considerations, before it is demonstrated from scripture?” Here then we see, that in supporting this claim, the ground of scripture is entirely abandoned. The claim must be first established from *other considerations* before scripture is resorted to: Scripture is but secondary evidence, and may be cited merely to confirm other testimony! . Now then, we see how it is they get out of the circle: they break through and plunge into another. We charge them with proving infallibility from scripture, and scripture from infallibility. But they say, no: we do not prove infallibility from scripture, but “from other considerations,” after which we infallibly pronounce on scripture; then, and not till then, is it infallible proof of our infallibility.



Such reasoning as this, shows that they have been whirled round in this circle till their heads have become dizzy.

It is plain that we can have no other infallible proof, that the Church of Rome is infallible, but her own word; for she allows of no other infallible judge. Now this involves the absurdity of believing and disbelieving the same thing at the same time; for unless we beforehand believe the church to be infallible, her saying so is no infallible proof that it is so: and yet the very demand for proof shows that we doubt or disbelieve it. That is, when we ask the Church of Rome if she is infallible, it supposes, first, we are *certain* of her infallibility, else her word would be no proof. It supposes, secondly, that we are *uncertain* of her infallibility, else we would not ask the question. It is like proving to a man who denies all revelation, that the scriptures are inspired; by citing the text, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," &c. It is plainly absurd then, to appeal to the Church of Rome for proof of her own infallibility; and to appeal to the scriptures, is to reason in a circle, as we have shown. And what source of proof then is left? Why, to use the language of one of their writers above quoted, they must resort to "other considerations," and among these is *tradition*. But, what other proof have we that these traditions are from God, than that which the infallible church herself affords? Certainly none other, and, consequently, we are in the circle again: the church proves tradition, and tradition in turn proves the church.

To avoid this "vicious circle," Bellarmine, and those who follow him in his argument, admit that they do not prove the church's infallibility from scripture; but from *motives to credibility*, and from *plausible reasons* why men should believe it. Now, if this be the case, is not the sanction of infallibility a mere phantom? Their

interpretation of scripture is given to the world with all the imposing sanction of infallibility, while that infallibility rests upon mere "motives to credibility," according to their own showing. Is there a magic influence in the intervening pretence to infallibility, that renders all on one side sure and certain, while all on the other side is doubt, or at best but plausibility? If the foundation be in ruins and tottering, what intervening materials, resting upon that foundation, have such a potent spell as to render all the superstructure perfectly secure? Surely the idea is absurd. Our meaning is this: The church without infallibility, is not *certainly* correct in her interpretation of scripture. She, therefore, looks round for something on which to rest a claim to infallibility. The scriptures furnish no such ground; tradition does not; her own word carries no proof; at length she rests her claim upon mere *motives to credibility*, and *plausible reasons* why it should be believed. On this she rests her claim to infallibility. The foundation is admitted to be but plausible, but she is notwithstanding, now able to interpret with infallible certainty. Now we ask, what is there in this *claim* which makes her interpretations, after it is set up, *certainly correct*, while the foundation of the claim is *uncertain*, and only plausible? Is this the "demonstration of her infallibility from other considerations?" "Credat Appella, non ego!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME CONTINUED.

"Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain." Solomon.

The great and popular argument of the papists in favor of the claim to infallibility is derived from the great diversity of sentiment among protestants. There is, say they, no certainty in their religion. I suppose it will be admitted that there is as much real difference of opinion between papists and protestants, as there is between protestants themselves. It will also be admitted by papists, that when a man becomes a papist, he does it through *conviction of the truth*, which always implies a previous exercise of reason and judgment, (neither of which, by the way, is he afterwards permitted to exercise.) If then these two points be admitted, we at once see that the diversity of opinion concerning scripture truth, is between two who are equally entitled to the exercise of their own reason and judgment; or at least it is so with the protestant, whom we now suppose to be inquiring after truth on this subject. For if the poor protestant is not allowed the exercise of his reason and judgment, how is he to become a papist upon the ground of rational conviction? And what proselyte will admit that he became one on any other? Here, then, are two parties of opposite opinions, and both equally entitled to the free exercise of reason and judgment. Now, notwithstanding this diversity, the truth either can, or can not, be known. If it can

be known, then diversity of opinion is no argument against the possibility of knowing it: and if so, seeing the diversity is equal, that is, it is as great between the papist and the protestant as between the protestant and papist, how is it more impossible for the protestant to know the truth, than the papist? and how does diversity between protestants prevent any of their denominations from knowing the truth, and yet the diversity between protestants and papists does not prevent the papist from knowing it? If the truth can not be known where there is such great diversity, then how does the papist know it, since he differs from those who, he admits, have an equal right with himself to their reason and judgment? How does it come that he is so sure of his infallibility, seeing he professes to derive his knowledge from the very scriptures, concerning which the diversity in question exists? As then all the rest of christendom deny that the church of Rome is infallible, and since they have an equal right to their own judgment, who is to decide which is correct? If there be a judge, of whose infallibility I am infallibly certain, I will yield to his decisions: but when his infallibility is the subject matter to be determined, I must appeal to some other authority. And if we differ as to what that authority speaks on the point, I am not bound to yield to his claim to infallibility in interpreting it, for that is the thing to be proved. And the very fact of his appealing to authority, concedes to me the use of my reason and judgment in forming an opinion, and implies the right of refusing to submit unless convinced. Now here is diversity of opinion for which I surely cannot be censured, since I was under no obligation to yield consent unless convinced.

If, then, diversity of sentiment is an argument against the certainty of a thing, of which I cannot be infallibly assured, this is demonstration against the certainty of

infallibility. We have already shown that it would involve an absurdity to appeal to the church herself for infallible proof: To what then shall we appeal but to the scriptures? And if we appeal to this tribunal, I must have the privilege of exercising my own judgment and skill in interpreting scripture, else I should have no advantage by the appeal. Now in this appeal, the infallibility of the church must not give any kind of character or sanction to her interpretation till it be proved to exist, for otherwise it would be taking for granted the very point in debate; for I never would admit the sanction of infallibility, till I had certain proof of its existence. And this certain or infallible proof is the very thing we are now in quest of. Their great argument, therefore, derived from diversity among protestants destroys their own cause. For we can be at least as certain of the meaning of scripture, as they are that their church is infallible; for the proof is just as infallible in the one case as the other, and no more. And if diversity is proof against the certainty of our knowledge of scripture truth, it is equally so against the certainty of their infallibility: for before the certainty of infallibility is established, being all equally entitled to our reason and judgment, we are all upon an equal footing, and so long as the proof of infallibility is not certain and convincing, so long does diversity of opinion operate against its advocates as much as against protestants; and that the proof is uncertain is admitted by their great oracle Bellarmine, as we have before mentioned.

Papists boast much of the *unity* of their church, and urge it as a strong argument in favor of her infallibility. We have already shown that diversity of sentiment among protestants does not help their cause; now let us examine their claim to *unity* of sentiment; and in the first place, is it a fact that such unity really exists? We



venture to affirm and pledge ourselves to prove that *it does not*. We have already shown that there are at least *four* different opinions among them with regard to the seat of their imagined infallibility. Let it be remembered that this church claims to be unchangeably the same from the days of the apostles down to the present time, and that this unity of sentiment and doctrine has ever existed in her bosom. Now let any one look at the history even of the first and second centuries of the church; let him look at the various sects which arose during that period, and on down the third, fourth and fifth centuries, and he will find the church continually rent with heresies and schisms: even the fathers of the church differing among themselves on many points. We have before seen that the church once held doctrines that she now rejects, and what were once but mere matters of opinion are now fundamental doctrines. Let any one take this view of the early history of the church, and then tell *wherein consists the unity of the church*; then let him look at the church after the rise of the papal beast; let him look at the various sects that arose in her bosom; there we find the Franciscans maintaining that Mary was born immaculate; the Dominicans, on the contrary, maintaining that she was born in original sin, but that its effects were soon removed. We next find the Jesuits differing from the Dominicans on the subject of free will, the former holding to conditional, the latter to unconditional decrees. We then find the Jesuits differing from the Jansenists on the extent of the power and jurisdiction of the Pope, the one holding to his infallibility, the other denying it. We next find the order of Jesuits banished by a solemn bull of the Pope, and reprobated as the most pestiferous sect in society, and then again revived and encouraged by another solemn bull of the Pope. We have already noticed the

discrepancy in the decrees of councils; and to notice the discrepancy among Romish writers, and even among Popes themselves, would be an endless task; and yet this is the church of which *unity* is said to be her distinguishing characteristic! Much stress is laid on the imagined agreement between the church of Rome at the present day with the ancient fathers, as proof of that unity of sentiment which they contend has ever existed in that church; but a reference to the opinions of the early fathers, and even of some of the Popes, as they have since been misnamed, will convince any one that no such agreement really exists. "Though the writings of those fathers," says Calvin, "contain many wise and excellent things, yet in some respects they have suffered the common fate of mankind; their very dutiful children (papists) reverence only their errors and mistakes, but their excellencies they either overlook, or conceal, or corrupt; so that it may be truly said, to be their only study to collect dross from the midst of gold: Then they overwhelm us with senseless clamours as despisers and enemies of the fathers."\*

There was on many points, much disagreement as we have before seen, between the fathers themselves; let us now see if there be any less between them and the church of Rome at the present day; and I cannot better exhibit this discrepancy than by giving the following extract from the distinguished reformer just quoted, with his authorities. "There were two fathers,"† says Calvin, "of whom one said, that our God neither eats nor drinks, and therefore needs neither cups nor dishes; the other, that sacred things require no gold, and that gold is no recommendation of that which is not purchased with gold. This landmark therefore is transgressed by

\* Calv. Inst. ded. p. 16. † Acat. in lib. 2. cap. 16. Trip. Hist. Amb. lib. 2. de Off. c. 28.

those who in sacred things are so much delighted with gold, silver, ivory, jewels, muslins and silks; and suppose that God is not rightly worshipped, unless all these things abound in exquisite splendour, or rather extravagant profusion. There was a father\* who said he freely partook of flesh on a day when others abstained from it, because he was a Christian. They transgress the landmarks therefore when they curse the soul that tastes flesh in Lent. There were two fathers,† of whom one said, that a monk who labours not with his hands is on a level with a cheat or a robber; and the other that it is unlawful for monks to live on what is not their own, notwithstanding their assiduity in contemplations, studies, and prayers; and they have transgressed this landmark by placing the idle and distended carcasses of monks in cells and brothels, to be pampered on the substance of others. There was a father‡ who said, that to see a painted image of Christ, or of any saint, in the temples of Christians, is a dreadful abomination. Nor was this merely the sentence of an individual; it was also decreed by an ecclesiastical council, that the object of worship should not be painted on the walls. They are far from confining themselves within these landmarks, for every corner is filled with images. Another father|| has advised that after having discharged the office of humanity towards the dead by the rights of sepulture, we should leave them to their repose. They break through these landmarks by inculcating a constant solicitude for the dead. There was one of the fathers§ who asserted that the substance of bread and wine in the

\* Spiridion. Trip. Hist. lib. 1. c. 10.

† Trip. Hist. lib. 8. c. 1. August. de Opere Mon. c. 17.

‡ Epiph. Epist. ab. Hier. vers. Con. Eliber. c. 36.

|| Amb. lib. de Abra. 1. c. 7.

§ Gelas. Pap. in Conc. Rom.

eucharist ceases not, but remains, just as the substance of the human nature remains in the Lord Christ united with the divine. They transgress this landmark therefore by pretending, that on the words of the Lord being recited, the substance of bread and wine ceases, and is transubstantiated into his body and blood. There were two fathers,\* of whom one contended that the use of Christ's sacred supper should be wholly forbidden to those who, content with partaking of one kind, abstained from the other; the other strenuously maintained that Christian people ought not to be refused the blood of their Lord, for the confession of whom they are required to shed their own. These landmarks also they have removed, in appointing, by an inviolable law, that very thing which the former punished with excommunication, and the latter gave a powerful reason for disapproving. There was a father† who asserted the temerity of deciding on either side of an obscure subject, without clear and evident testimonies of scripture. This landmark they forgot when they made so many constitutions, canons, and judicial determinations, without any authority from the word of God. There was a father‡ who upbraided Montanus with having, among other heresies, been the first imposer of laws for the observance of fasts. They have gone far beyond this landmark also, in establishing fasts by the strictest laws. There was a father|| who denied that marriage ought to be forbidden to the ministers of the church, and declared that in such a marriage there was nothing unbecoming; and there were other fathers who assented to his judgment. They have

\* Geles. can. Comperimus de Cons. dist. 2. Cypr. Epist. 2. lib. 1 de Laps.

† August. lib. 2. de Pec. Mer. cap. ult.

‡ Apollon. de quo Eccl. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 11, 12.

|| Paphnut. Trip. Hist. lib. 2. c. 14, 12. Cypr. Epist. 2. l. 2.

transgressed these landmarks by enjoining on their priests the strictest celibacy. There was a father who thought that attention should be paid to Christ only, of whom it is said, "Hear ye him," and that no regard should be had to what others before us have either said or done, only to what has been commanded by Christ who is pre-eminent over all. This landmark they neither prescribe to themselves, nor permit to be observed by others, when they set up over themselves and others any masters rather than Christ. There was a father\* who contended that the church ought not to take the precedence of Christ, because his judgment is always according to truth, but ecclesiastical judges, like other men, may generally be deceived. Breaking down this landmark also, they scruple not to assert, that all the authority of the scripture depends on the decision of the church. All the fathers with one heart and voice have declared it execrable and detestable for the holy word of God to be contaminated with the subtleties of sophists, and perplexed by the wrangles of logicians. Do they confine themselves within these landmarks, when the whole business of their lives is to involve the simplicity of the scriptures in endless controversies, and worse than sophistical wrangles? So that if the fathers were now restored to life, and heard this act of wrangling, which they call speculative divinity, they would not suspect the dispute to have the least reference to God. But if I would enumerate all the instances in which the authority of the fathers is insolently rejected by those who would be thought their dutiful children, my address would exceed all reasonable bounds."† Will any now deny that there is at least as much unity among protestants as among papists? All protestants are as unanimous in opposing popery as papists are in maintaining it. All pro-

\* Aug. cap. 2. contr. Cresc. Gram. † Calv. Inst. ded. p. 17.



testants are *one* in this respect, and it is only in this respect that papists are *one*. Look at the various denominations of protestants, and you will find, at least, as much unity among each one of them as among the papists. There is as much unity among Presbyterians as among papists. A Presbyterian might well say to a papist, "we are no more of your mind than you are of ours, notwithstanding all your infallibility."

It is only when the papist views all protestant christendom as one denomination, that he can say with any truth that there is such a vast diversity of doctrine among them. But what right has the papist thus to view protestant christendom? We as Presbyterians disclaim all connexion equally with the Unitarian as with the Romish denomination. We view ourselves as perfectly distinct from them as the papists view themselves from us. So also with regard to all other denominations: As a denomination, we conceive that we are no more chargeable with their heresies and differences in doctrine, than the church of Rome is: not a whit more. As a denomination, we are perfectly *distinct* from all others, but not so far separated from some as from others. With equal propriety, the Presbyterian church might set up a claim to *Unity*, and found that claim upon the great diversity of sentiment and doctrine existing among all those who differ from them, not excepting the church of Rome. She might, as the church of Rome does, view all who differ from her as one denomination, and then charge home upon them the great diversity that exists among them. She might point to herself as an example of *Unity*, and cry down the Papists, the Baptists, the Methodists, Unitarians, &c. not only because they differ from her, but even from one another. I say the Presbyterian church might do this with the same propriety as the church of Rome does, unless we take for granted the

very point in the whole dispute, namely, that the Romish church is the same as the apostolic church; that she has never changed, and is now the only true church. But who does not see that this would be giving up the whole cause we have undertaken to defend? We believe that we come nearer in character to the apostolic church than all others, the Baptists believe that they do, so also the Methodists, Episcopalians, &c. &c. It is futile, therefore, to urge the claim to *Unity* as an argument for infallibility.

We have hitherto argued upon the supposition that each protestant denomination is, *at least, as unanimous* in sentiment as the Romish denomination. But the fact is, this latter denomination is the least so of any other. One says, I am of Benedict; another, I am of Dominick; another, I am of Francis; another, I am of Jesus, &c. Look into their writings and see how they condemn, abuse and vilify one another; from their own account, one would think they were the greatest villains in creation. Look, too, at the different orders of mendicants; see them on a begging expedition, how they would quarrel and fight like so many savages.

Turn your attention to the popes also, see how uncere- moniously they have set aside each other's solemn decrees; At one time, there were *four* popes, all presiding at once over *papal unity* excommunicating and anathe- matizing each other, and thundering their bulls at each other's heads. Philip, King of France, provoked by the haughty and overbearing demeanour of Boniface VIII. who, in the fourteenth century, stood on that proud and guilty eminence of absolute spiritual and temporal dominion, which had been the desire of almost every Pon- tiff, hurled him from his seat, and placed a Frenchman in the Papal see, and fixed his residence at Avignon in France; this remained the seat of the Papacy for seven-

ty years, a period called by Papists *the Babylonish Captivity*. The Romans, however, wishing to have the Pope to reside at Rome, elected one in opposition to the Pope at Avignon. Europe became divided and distracted. For fifty years the church had *two*, sometimes *three*, and at one time, as we have mentioned, *four* Popes, who did little else than hurl anathemas at each other. Besides, when these four popes were in authority, how was it determined who was the true successor of Peter and the vicar of Christ? Surely, only by the strong arm of power, and by the success of cunning, intrigue and deception. Only one of these popes could have been the true vicar of Christ, and if so, all the appointments and ordinations of the other three were of no validity, and the spiritual functions of all their successors down to the present day are of no better authority; how then, we ask, are those priests and bishops and cardinals of the false line to be distinguished from those of the true line? May not the present pope be of the false line? Can the contrary be demonstrated? Where now is the boasted unity of the Romish Church? It has been truly remarked, that "Papists are more indebted to the INQUISITION for their *Unity* than to their infallibility."

Since the council of Trent, it is taught in all Romish churches, that a council can decree nothing, without the assent of the pope; that he alone has the right to interpret the council and explain its decisions, and that those tenets only are of faith, which he determines to be so: Thus it is evident that infallibility rests ultimately with the pope. The council declares the meaning of some passage in scripture, or of some point of tradition, and then the pope pronounces infallibly upon the sense of this declaration. (Vide Dr. Wharton's Letter to the Rom. Cath. at Worcester, p. 26, *note*.) Contrast with this a

single instance of the pope's infallibility. Sextus V. when he ascended the papal chair, found the scriptures to be in such a state of corruption, that he declared them to be any thing but the scriptures, and he set to work with his learned doctors and cardinals to prepare a correct edition, and after much labor it was published, and he issued a bull against all who should alter it in the smallest particle. It remained unaltered for some time, but Clement VIII. said there were *two thousand principal errors* with many smaller ones; he therefore condemned it, and published the present Clementine Edition. So much for the infallibility of popes, whose province it is to declare infallibly on the decisions of councils.

Let us now for a moment examine some of the scripture texts on which the claim to infallibility rests. Although we have shown that the nature of the case precludes the possibility of proving it from scripture, yet, *gratia argumēti*, let us admit the possibility, and see if the claim could actually be made out. The Romanists adduce this text; "If ye love me keep my commandments, and I will ask my Father, and he shall give you another comforter (*or paraclete*) that he may abide with you forever, even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive." John xiv, 15, 16. Now it is plain to common sense that this promise is not made to those who are worldly minded, and who keep not the commandments of God, but to converted and holy men. Now in the first place, as no man can judge the heart, it therefore can not be certain to what individual it is made, but in the next place, knowing them by their fruits, it is certain that this promise never was made to the one-twentieth of the popes, nor to a greater number of those, who have, from time to time, composed the councils of the Romish Church; for authentic history informs us, that most of the bishops while on their journey to the place where

a council was to be held, were openly attended by prostitutes! Surely, such are not the persons to whom that spirit which the *world cannot receive*, is promised on the condition that they *keep the commandments of God!*

Another text quoted, is the implied injunction to hear the church;\* but that injunction has no more to do with the infallibility of the church than it has to do with purgatory; (and not half as much, for if there be a purgatory, it is being cast out of the church, and given over to Satan for the correction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved.) The injunction is not to hear the church in the exposition of doctrine, but it is, that when a brother hath trespassed against you, you are first to go alone and tell him his fault, and if he hear thee, well; if not, take some of the officers of the church along, and if he hear not them, tell it to the church; and if he *hear not the church*; let him be as a heathen; i. e. excommunicate him. It is plain, that the text only proves, that in *cases of order*, the church is the ultimate appellate court. It only requires that the passage be read in its connexion to convince any one, that it has nothing to do with the point in hand. The text in John xvi, 13, where the spirit of truth is again spoken of, does not prove their point for the same reason that the promise itself does not. As to the first council being an argument, it cannot be, for we all admit that the first council consisted of *inspired men*.

It will be observed, that the pope of Rome, in quoting these texts, to support his claim to infallibility, takes for granted, that by "the church," is meant the church of Rome, and by the expressions "ye," and "my people," and "Zion," &c. &c. is meant the Romish Church only; which, of course, is taking for granted, what we

\*Matthew xviii, 17.



utterly deny; papists must, therefore, prove that their church is referred to, or all their quotations go for nothing.

The immediately succeeding text in this connexion, is relied on by papists with much confidence. "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Now the great question here is, to what does the binding and loosing spoken of here refer? Why, plainly, it refers to those acts of the church of which Christ was then speaking, that is, to church censures and discipline. In the preceding text, as we have seen, our Saviour gives direction how to treat an offender against the order of the church. He gives the church the power of discipline even to excommunication, and then assures the church, that wherever that discipline is exercised by the proper authorities of the church, and in a proper manner, he will sanction it, he will recognize it; that what they thus do, in virtue of the authority delegated to them, he will sanction; and it is this that gives so much importance to a solemn excommunication by the church. It is plain, therefore, that this passage refers to the same thing with the preceding one, namely, to ecclesiastical order and discipline. It does not, and can not, refer to forgiving sins in reference to future punishment. Christ was exalted to give remission of sins in this sense: sins can not be forgiven in this sense, without the exercise of faith and repentance. But how is a mere man to know when this is exercised. Such a construction of the text, would plainly leave the salvation of every man to the option of the church. It evidently refers, merely to sins which are cognizable by the visible church. It can not, therefore, refer to the settling of controversies. The same remark is applicable to the next verse, "that if

two or three of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven," &c.

This is to show the efficacy of joint prayer. It moreover shows, that no single person may take the church authority in his own hands. If it referred to infallibility, it would prove too much, for it would prove that any *two* would be *infallible*; there would be no need of convening a great council to decide matters; this whole passage, therefore, unless torn from its connexion and distorted, can not afford a shadow of proof for the claim of infallibility.

But admitting the full force of all these quotations, and of the arguments built upon them, all that is proved, is, that there is an infallible church. Now in a restricted sense we are not disposed to deny this; for, that there exists a church infallible in *fundamentals* we readily admit; but this is very far from proving that any church is an infallible guide in matters of religion; and much farther still from proving that the Romish church is that church. An invisible church may be in itself infallible, but being *invisible*, how shall we apply to it for direction even in fundamentals? We can have no such communication with an invisible church, *as such*; and we deny that there exists, and that papists have ever shown it to be even probable that there exists, an *infallible visible church*.

But, after all, supposing the claim to infallibility to be fairly and indisputably made out; supposing we have been driven from every stand we have taken, in opposing this claim, and supposing this claim to be irrefutable, we are yet at a loss to know, what good end it will answer. It is pretended that it secures, not only unity of sentiment in the church, but absolute certainty as to what the scriptures teach. But is this really the case?

It has been, we think, fully shown that unity of sentiment has not been secured; and we think, from the very nature of the case, infallible certainty as to truth can not possibly be obtained. The pope, in his decisions upon the declarations of councils, or if you please, the pope and council together in their decisions as to what the scriptures teach, profess, and are supposed to be guided by the spirit of truth, that is, the Spirit of God.

Now every private christian either is, or is not, under the same guidance. If he be, he is manifestly as infallible as the pope and his council; and if he be not thus guided, is he not just as liable to misinterpret the decrees and decisions of the pope and council, as he is to misinterpret the word of God? Does the fact that the scriptures are divinely inspired, render them more liable to misinterpretation than the language of uninspired men? Or, supposing councils and popes to be guided by inspiration in their decisions, is there such a superiority in their inspiration, as to render their words less liable to misinterpretation, than the words of the evangelists and apostles, and even of the Son of God himself?

When the Apostle Paul declares, that *by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God*, are we more liable to error in interpreting it, as excluding all good works from our justification, than those who follow the Romish church, in giving it a directly opposite meaning? If, then, it is not the inspiration, or the divine superintendence of the councils and popes, which more completely secures to their words a correct interpretation, than to the words of God himself, what does secure it? Were not the writers of the Old and New Testaments, at least, as infallible as the popes and councils of the church of Rome? What is it then, we again ask, that prevents the meaning of the latter

from being misunderstood, that does not prevent the words of the former from misconstruction? Is it the mere fact of reducing divine truth to a human formula? Does this infallibly produce the desired effect? In the language of an article in the Biblical Repertory for 1829, we would say, "The Lutherans have their confession of Augsburg; the English church their thirty-nine articles; the Scotch and French Calvinists have a confession still more extended and minute. But the Lutherans are Neologists, the English are Arminians, the Scotch have their *moderate men*, which is but another name for Arminians; and the French, as a church, have now, if we are rightly informed, no creed at all."\*

Manifestly then, it is not the reducing divine truth to a formula, or the setting it forth in human language, that infallibly secures to it a correct interpretation. A difference of opinion arises as to the true import of that part of scripture which speaks of predestination for instance, the expedient of a human formula is resorted to for the purpose of making it plain, and accordingly the seventeenth article of the church of England is drawn up for this purpose. John Calvin had taught that that doctrine was plainly held in the scriptures, and the framers of that article, agreeing with him in sentiment, adopted the words of that great and good man almost *verbatim*.† But has this secured unity of sentiment? No: clearly not, for there is as wide a difference in the interpretation of this article, as there is of that part of scripture which it was designed to explain and settle. The question then again forces itself upon us, what is to secure the certain and unanimous interpretation of the decisions and decrees of councils and popes? Do their words need less explanation than those of the all-wise and infallible God? If not, according to their own

\* Page 490.

† Vide Calvin's Inst. Lib. iii. chap. xxxi.

principle, they should be explained, and who shall do it? Why, the priests and doctors are the daily interpreters of those decisions: but on the same principle, the priests and doctors need interpreters, and who shall they be? Why, where they dare, they employ that most infallible of all interpreters; that most sure and successful corrector of heresy, the INQUISITION.

Papists vainly imagine that by the infallibility of their church the authority of the scriptures is established. They are for ever boasting that it was through their church alone that we obtained the scriptures, and that her infallibility is the best evidence of their genuineness and antiquity. But while they take the credit of this to themselves, we give it to the great Author of the "Lively Oracles," who has preserved them uncorrupted to the present day. Their divinity seemed to secure them from being tainted and polluted by the filth of the medium through which they have passed. God, by his providence, preserved them in that church, as he did in the Jewish church, even after it had become corrupt; and if the simple fact of preserving the scriptures entire and uncorrupted is an evidence of infallibility, the Jewish church had the same title to infallibility that the Romish church now has: and this title I will readily acknowledge, since the corruption and apostacy of both, have clearly shown that their infallibility was the same in kind and degree. But will Papists vouch their infallibility for the authenticity of the *second commandment*, as it stands in our edition of the scriptures? It certainly came down to us through the same medium with the rest of the scriptures, and its authority rests upon the same foundation. But is it true that their authenticity is established only by the infallibility of the church of Rome?

It is not necessary to the true nature of faith, says



Archbishop Tillotson, that we should be infallibly secured of the means whereby the Christian doctrine is conveyed to us: particularly of the antiquity and authority of the books of scripture, and that the expressions in it cannot possibly bear any other sense; which is evident upon these two accounts, because *faith may be without this infallible security*, and because in the particulars mentioned *it is impossible to be had*.

1. Because faith may be without this infallible security. He that is so assured of the antiquity and authority of the books of scripture, and of the sense of those texts wherein the doctrines of Christianity are plainly delivered, as to see no just cause to doubt thereof, may really assent to those doctrines, though he have no infallible security: and an assent so grounded I affirm to have the true nature of faith. For what *degree of assent*, and what *security of the means*, which convey to us the knowledge of Christianity, are necessary to the true nature of faith, is to be estimated from the end of faith, which is the salvation of men's souls. And whoever is so assured of the *authority* and *sense* of scripture, as to believe the doctrine of it, and to live accordingly, shall be saved. And surely such a belief as will save a man, hath the true nature of faith, though it be not *infallible*. And if God have sufficiently provided for the salvation of men of all capacities, it is no such reflection upon the goodness and wisdom of providence as Mr. S.\* imagines, that he hath not taken care that every man's faith should arrive to the degree of *infallibility*; nor does our blessed Saviour, for not having made this provision, deserve

\* Mr. S. is the author of a work, entitled "*Faith vindicated from the possibility of falsehood*," written against a passage in Tillotson's sermon on "*the wisdom of being religious*," in which sermon he was led to examine, with his usual ability, some of the principles involved in the Romish doctrine of infallibility.

“to be esteemed by all the world, not as a wise law-giver, but a mere ignoramus and impostor,” as one of his fellow controvertists\* speaks with reverence.

Besides, this assertion that infallibility is necessary to the true nature of that assent which we call faith, is plainly false on another account also: because faith admits of *degrees*. But infallibility has none. The scripture speaks of a *weak* and a *strong* faith, and of the *increase* of faith; but I never heard of a weak and strong *infallibility*. Infallibility is the highest perfection of a knowing faculty, and consequently the firmest degree of assent upon the firmest grounds, and which are known to be so. But will Mr. S. say, that the highest degree of assent admits of degrees, and is capable of increase? *Infallibility is an absolute impossibility of being deceived*; now I desire Mr. S. to show me the degrees of *absolute impossibility*; and if he could do that, consequently there might be degrees of infallibility, yet I can not believe Mr. S. would think fit to call any degrees of infallibility a *weak* faith or assent.

2. Because an infallible security, in the particulars mentioned, is impossible to be had. I mean in an ordinary way, and without miracle and particular revelation; because the nature of the thing is incapable of it. The utmost security we have of the antiquity of any book, is *human testimony*, and all human testimony is fallible for this plain reason, because all men are fallible. And though Mr. S., in defence of his beloved *tradition*, is pleased to say that human testimony in some cases is infallible, yet I think no man before him was ever so hardy as to maintain that the testimony of *fallible* men was *infallible*. I grant it to be in many cases *certain*; that is, such as a considerate man may prudently rely and proceed upon, and hath no just cause to doubt of;

\* Labyrinthus Cantauriensis, p. 77.

and such as none but an obstinate man or a fool can deny. And that thus the learned men of his own church define certainty, Mr. S. (if he would but vouchsafe to read such books) might have learnt from Melchior Canus, who, speaking of the firmness of human testimony in some cases (which yet he did not believe to be infallible,) defines it thus: "Those things are certain among men, which can not be denied without obstinacy and folly."\* I know Mr. S. is pleased to say that *certainty* and *infallibility* are all one. And he is the first man, that I know of, that ever said it. And yet perhaps somebody may have been before him in it, for I remember Tully says, that "there is nothing so foolish but some philosopher or other has said it." I am sure Mr. S.'s own philosopher, Mr. White, contradicts him in this most clearly, in his "preface to *Rushworth's Dialogues*," where, explicating the term "*moral certainty*," he tells us that "some understood by it such a certainty as makes the cause always work the same effect, though it take not away the absolute possibility of working other ways;" and this he, presently after, tells us "ought absolutely to be recorded in the degree of true certainty, and the authors considered as mistaken in undervaluing it." So that according to Mr. White, *true certainty* may consist with a *possibility of the contrary*, and consequently Mr. S. is mistaken in thinking certainty and infallibility to be all one. Nay, I do not find any two of them agreeing among themselves, about the notions of *infallibility* and *certainty*. Mr. White says that what some call *moral certainty* is *true certainty*, though it do not take away a possibility of the contrary. Mr. S. asserts the direct contrary, that *moral certainty* is only *probability*, because it does not take away the possibility of the con-

\* Certa apud homines ea sunt, quæ negari sine pervicacia, et stultitia non possunt. De lo. Theol. lib. ii. c. 4.

trary. The "*Guide in Controversies*"\* differs from them both, and makes *moral, certain, and infallible*, all one. I desire that they would agree upon these matters among themselves, before they quarrel with us about them.

In brief then, though *moral certainty* be sometimes taken for a high degree of probability which can only produce a doubtful assent, yet it is also frequently used for a firm and undoubted assent to a thing, upon such grounds as are fit fully to satisfy a prudent man; and in this sense I have always used the term. But now infallibility is an absolute security from all possibility of mistake in what it believes. And there are but two ways for the understanding to be thus secured; either by the *perfection of its own nature*, or by *supernatural assistance*. But no human understanding being absolutely secured from possibility of mistake, by the perfection of its own nature, (which I think all mankind except Mr. S. have hitherto granted,) it follows, that no man can be infallible in any thing, but by supernatural assistance. Nor did ever the church of Rome pretend to infallibility upon any other account, as every one knows that has been conversant in the writings of their learned men, who generally resolve faith into the infallible testimony of the church, and the infallibility of their church into our Saviour's promise: and the evidence of the true church into the *marks of the church*, or the *motives of credibility*: which *motives* are acknowledged to be only *prudential*, and not demonstrative. Bellarmine says,† that the marks of the church do not make it *evidently true*, which is the true church, but only *evidently credible*; "and that," says he, "is said to be evidently credible which is neither seen in itself, nor in its principles; but yet has so many and so weighty testimonies, that every wise man has reason to believe

\* Page 135.      † De Eccl. lib. iv.

it." Becanus,\* to the same purpose, says the "motives to credibility are only the foundation of a *prudent*, but not of an *infallible* assent."

It is contended that the great advantage which is secured by the infallibility of the church is, that it strengthens and confirms the faith of believers; and above all, that it *unerringly* guides their faith to the *truth*. This would indeed be a glorious advantage if it were really secured; but I apprehend it is a position capable of demonstration, that the infallibility of the church, even supposing it to exist, never can, as its legitimate effect, secure this end, *unless the believer is infallibly assured of its existence*. I say, as its *legitimate* effect, because on *superstitious* minds this effect may be produced; but a mind free from all superstition and bigotry, never can be confirmed in any belief by the infallibility of the church, unless it be already confirmed in the belief that such infallibility really exists. The mistake of Papists in this matter lies here, they suppose that the mere existence of infallibility will secure that, which an infallible assurance of such infallibility alone can secure. Supposing, therefore, that the Romish church is infallible, I never can be certain of the truth in following her, unless I am *certain* that she is infallible; the mere existence of infallibility therefore, without my certain knowledge of it, never can secure the end designed.

If a witness, who, for the sake of argument, we will suppose to be actually infallible, should give his testimony to a jury in a case before them, what effect would his infallibility have on the minds of the jurors, if they were not assured of such infallibility? Suppose they should agree upon a verdict in the view of *plausible reasons* and *motives of credibility*, as to the existence of such infallibility, would it follow that the verdict would

\* Sum. Tom. 2 partic. de fide, c. 1.



be infallibly according to truth? would it follow, that the jurors themselves would be infallibly assured of the correctness of their verdict? If not, why should a believer, by following the church of Rome, even supposing her to be infallible, be strengthened and confirmed in his belief?

I am not to be told, that according to this reasoning, since we have no infallible testimony as to the authenticity of the scriptures, there is no certainty in our religion; the cases are altogether different, as a moment's examination will evince. In the case of the church of Rome, my uncertainty is as to the fact of her infallibility, and not as to the infallibility of the testimony that she has settled points of faith. But in the other case I am in no doubt as to the infallibility of God. I am as infallibly certain as demonstration can make me, that God is infallible in all that he says and does; and the only uncertainty that can exist in this case is, as to the fact that he has spoken, and declared his mind. All, therefore, that I need be assured of in this case is, that the scriptures are from God; that they are certainly true is a natural and necessary consequence. But in the other case, it is not enough that I be assured that such and such are the declarations of the church, for after this I have still another difficulty, which indeed is the chief difficulty, and the very one with which we set out, viz: Is the church *infallible* in these declarations? Is it *certainly known* that they are according to truth? Let these difficulties be removed; let me be assured of the infallibility of the church, and then the cases will not be so different.

The authenticity of the scriptures, so far as external evidence is concerned, does indeed depend upon human testimony; but it is such testimony as no reasonable man can reject: it is a testimony which even the infidel does

not reject in other matters; it is the same kind of testimony on which criminals are capitally condemned; it is a species of testimony, the rejection of which would throw into uncertainty, doubt and confusion, the truth of events, the denial of which would now expose any man to derision and contempt, and render him a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. The truth is, that in the view of all the testimony, both external and internal, that exists in favour of the authenticity of the scriptures, it requires *far more credulity* to believe that they are *not* from God, than to believe the contrary.

I have all the evidence that the nature of the case admits of, without a miracle; and all that is necessary to convince any reasonable mind, that the scriptures are from God; and being assured of His infallibility, they readily obtain my assent to the truths which they contain. But, though I may have as good evidence of the authenticity and genuineness of the decrees and decisions of the church, as I have of the scriptures, yet not being assured of the infallibility of the church, those decrees and decisions do not as readily obtain my assent. If then the infallibility of the Romish church would secure the desired end, every believer must be infallibly assured that such infallibility actually exists; which can never be done by "*plausible reasons and motives of credibility*;" but must be done, if at all, by miracles or demonstration, as we have before observed.

Infallibility is not necessary to the true nature of faith, otherwise it would make every true believer infallible in matters of faith. Besides, if this be true, says Archbishop Tillotson, what need is there of infallibility in the pope or council? I doubt not, says he, but that the advocates of this doctrine would be loth to preach it at Rome; for I have often heard that there is an old testy gentle-

*man* lives there, who would take it very ill that any one besides himself should pretend to be infallible.\*

Infallibility is not necessary in order to ascertain the sense of scripture, as we have already remarked, for it is plainly impossible, says Tillotson, that any thing should be delivered in such clear and certain words, as are absolutely incapable of any other sense; and yet notwithstanding this, the meaning of them may be so plain as that any unprejudiced and reasonable man may certainly understand them. How many *definitions* and *axioms*, &c. are there in Euclid, in the sense of which men are universally agreed, and think themselves undoubtedly certain of it? and yet the words in which they are expressed, may possibly bear another sense. The same may be said concerning the doctrines and precepts of the Holy Scriptures; and one great reason why men do not so generally agree in the sense of these as of the other, is because the interests, and lusts, and passions, of men are more concerned in the one than in the other. Neither does oral tradition, on which papists so much rely, help us in this matter, for whatever uncertainty there may be in the sense of any texts of scripture, oral tradition, so far from affording us any help in this case, is a thousand times more uncertain and less to be trusted to: especially if we take that to be the traditionary sense of texts of scripture, which we meet in the decretals of their popes, and the acts of some of their councils; than which there never was any thing in the whole world more absurd and ridiculous: and whence may we expect to have the infallible traditional sense of scripture, if not from the *heads* and *representatives* of their church.†

The claim to infallibility, therefore, by the Romish church, seeing there is no proof of its existence, but

\* Preface to Tillotson's works, p. 9.

† Ibid. p. 6.

rather proof to the contrary, gives her no right to withhold the scriptures from the people.

But why are Papists so zealous in this matter of infallibility? There is a plain reason for it, says Tillotson: they find that confidence, how weakly soever it be grounded, has some effect upon the common and ignorant people; who are apt to think there is something more than ordinary in a swaggering man, that talks of nothing but *principles* and *demonstrations*. And so we see it in some other professions. There is a sort of people very well known, who find that the most effectual way to cheat the people, is always to pretend to INFALLIBLE CURES.\*

The original question now returns, we think, with peculiar force: What good end does the infallibility of the church, admitting that it exists, possibly answer? Surely none whatever. It only secures from superstitious minds that respect and submission to her authority, which her piety never could command, and which, from minds enlightened by scripture truth, even her imagined infallibility and all her external devotion, *never could secure*.

\* Preface to Tillotson's works, p. 10.

## CHAPTER IX.

### TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

“And then shall that wicked be revealed,—even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.” *Paul.*

“Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth:—But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.” *Paul.*

“TRANSUBSTANTIATION! a *hard word*,” says archbishop Tillotson, “but I would to God that were the worst of it; the *thing* is much more difficult. I have taken some pains to consider other religions that have been in the world, and I must freely declare, that I never yet in any of them met with any article or proposition, imposed upon the belief of men, half so unreasonable and hard to be believed as this is: and yet this in the Romish church is esteemed one of the most principal articles of the Christian faith; though there is no more certain foundation for it in scripture, than for our Saviour’s being substantially changed into all those things which are said of him, as that he is a *rock*, a *vine*, a *door*, and a hundred other things.

But this is not all. This doctrine hath not only no certain foundation in scripture, but I have a far heavier charge against it, namely, that it undermines the very foundation of Christianity itself. And surely nothing ought to be admitted to be a part of the Christian doctrine which destroys the reason of our belief of the whole. And that this doctrine does so, will appear evidently, if we consider what was the main argument which the apostles used to convince the world of the



truth of Christianity; and that was this, that our blessed Saviour, the author of this doctrine, wrought such and such miracles, and particularly that he rose again from the dead. And this they proved because they were eye-witnesses of his miracles, and had seen him and conversed with him after he was risen from the dead. But what if their senses did deceive them in this matter? then it cannot be denied but that the main proof of Christianity falls to the ground.

Well! we will now suppose (as the church of Rome does) transubstantiation to have been one principle part of the Christian doctrine which the apostles preached. But if this doctrine be true, then all men's senses are deceived in a plain sensible matter, wherein it is as hard for them to be deceived as in any thing in the world: For two things can hardly be imagined more different, than a *little bit* of wafer and the *whole body* of a man. So that the apostles persuading men to believe this doctrine persuaded them not to trust their senses, and yet the argument which they used to persuade them to this was built upon direct contrary principle, that *men's senses are to be trusted*. For if they be not, then notwithstanding all the evidence the apostles offered for the resurrection of our Saviour, he might not be risen, and so the faith of Christians was vain. So that they represent the apostles as absurd as is possible, viz. going about to persuade men out of their senses by virtue of an argument, the whole strength whereof depends upon the certainty of sense.

And now the matter is brought to a fair issue; If the testimony of sense be to be relied upon, then transubstantiation is false; if it be not, then no man is sure that Christianity is true. For the utmost assurance that the apostles had of the truth of Christianity was the testimony of their own senses concerning our Saviour's mi-

racles, and this testimony every man hath against transubstantiation. From whence it plainly follows, that no man (no not the apostles themselves) had more reason to believe Christianity to be true, than every man hath to believe transubstantiation to be false. And we who did not see our Saviour's miracles, (as the apostles did) and have only a credible relation of them, but do see the Sacrament, have *less* evidence of the *truth of Christianity* than of the *falsehood of transubstantiation*.

But cannot God impose upon the senses of men, and represent things to them otherwise than they are? Yes, undoubtedly. And if he hath revealed that he doth this, are we not to believe him? Most certainly. But then we ought to be assured that he hath made such a revelation; which assurance no man can have, the certainty of sense being taken away.\*"

"Notwithstanding the doctrine of transubstantiation is *now* held by the church of Rome," says Tillotson, in another place, "yet they have not, nor can have any assurance that it was the doctrine of Christ, and that it has descended to them by an uninterrupted tradition. I contend not against the word transubstantiation, (which is generally acknowledged to be new) but only the thing signified by it, a substantial change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. And this I might shew at large not to have been the doctrine of the ancient fathers. But because Mr. White and Dr. Holden, and Mr. Cressy do so frequently and confidently tell us, that nothing is to be reputed a traditional doctrine, the contrary whereof hath been publicly held by any catholic who continued afterwards uncensured, and in the communion of the church: therefore I shall content myself at present with one clear testimony, and that of a very eminent person in the church, St.

\* Tillotson's Works, vol. i. p. 122.

Theodoret, concerning whom Pope Leo, (in an epistle to him, at the end of Theodoret's works) gives this testimony, that in the judgment of the apostolic See he was free from all stain of heresy. The passage I intend is in his dialogues, between a catholic under the name of Orthodoxus, and Eranistes, who sustained the person of an heretic. Eranistes\* maintaining that the body of Christ was changed into the substance of divinity, he illustrates it by this similitude. "As," says he, "the symbols of the Lord's body and blood are one thing before the invocation of the priest; but after the invocation, are changed and do become another thing, so the body of our Lord, after his ascension, is changed into the divine substance." To which Orthodoxus returns this answer, "Thou art caught in thine own net; because the mystical symbols after consecration do not pass out of their own nature; for they remain in their former substance, figure and appearance, and may be seen and handled even as before." He does not only in express words deny the substance of the symbols to be changed, but the occasion upon which these words are brought in, and the scope of them (if they be of any force against the heretic's illustration) render them incapable of any other sense. When Mr. S. hath answered this testimony, I have more for him.

That which I mainly urge against this doctrine is, the monstrous absurdities and contradictions contained in it, together with the necessary consequence of them. Several of the absurdities of it are well brought together by Scotus,† who tells us, that to prove the possibility of Christ's body being contained under the species of bread and wine, many things must be proved which seem to involve a contradiction; as 1. That one quantum (or extended body) may be together in the very

\* Dialó. 2. † Distinct. 1. 4. dist. 10. qu. i. n. 3.

same place with another. 2. That a less quantum may be together in the same place with a greater; i. e. a body of less extension may occupy not only the same, but as much room as a body of greater extension does; which is to say no more but this, that a body less than another may be as great as that other even whilst it is less than it. 3. That a greater quantum may be together with every part of a less quantum; i. e. a body that is greater than another, may be as little as the least part of that other body which is less than it. 4. That a subject may be without quantity; i. e. there may be a body which hath no kind of magnitude. 5. That a body may be somewhere where it was not before without changing its place; i. e. a body may be removed to another place, whilst it remains still in the same place. 6. That a quantum may be without any quantitative mode; i. e. a body may be extended without any manner of extension. “The possibility of all which,” he saith, (and I am very much of his mind,) “it would be too tedious a work to prove;” and therefore he only attempts to prove the two last, which, in all reason, is work enough for one man. All these *seeming* contradictions, as he modestly calls them, are by his own acknowledgment involved in this doctrine. To these I might add many more; as, how a thing can be said to be changed into another thing which did exist before. How a body can be present in a place after the manner of a spirit: and yet this they affirm concerning the presence of Christ’s body in the sacrament; one might as well say that snow is black, but not after the manner of blackness, but in the way of whiteness, which is to talk nonsense after the manner of sense. How the whole body of Christ can be contained under the least sensible part of the species of bread, as is generally affirmed: nay,

and Scotus\* adds, that the whole body is under every little part in its full proportion; for he says expressly, that “the head and the foot of the body of Christ are as far distant from one another in the sacrament, as they are in Heaven;” as if one should say that a body, all whose parts lie within the compass of a small pin’s head, may yet within that little compass have parts two yards distant from one another. And lastly, how the sensible *species* of bread, e. g. *quantity, whiteness, softness, &c.* can exist without any *subject*: To affirm the possibility of which, (as generally they do,) is to say that there may be quantities of *white and soft nothings*: for this is the plain English of that assertion, that *sensible species may exist without a subject*: which being stripped of those terms of art (*species* and *subject*) that do a little disguise it, it appears to be plain NONSENSE.”†

The doctrine of transubstantiation originated in the latter part of what is commonly called the “*dark age*.” It was settled to be an article of faith in the year 1215; and surely it is a doctrine well suited to the philosophy of such an age. If, as this doctrine supposes, the properties of the bread remain, while the substance is changed, does it not settle an important point in natural science? namely, that the properties of one substance may readily become the properties of another, and quite a different substance. In what way do we ascertain the nature of substances but by their properties? If the substance may change, and yet the properties remain the same, we can never be certain of the substance of any thing; while feeding upon bread, we may be eating flesh; we never can be certain that we are purchasing what we intend to purchase: the properties may indeed be the same, but the substance may be altogether different.

\* *Distinct. l. 4. dist. 10, qu. i. n. 11.* † *Till. vol. i. p. 735.*



But this doctrine settles another point in natural science, namely, that the difference in matter consists in something else besides the difference in its properties. Who can decide, except by this wonderful doctrine, that the difference in matter, consists in a real difference in the *substratum*, or substance, and not merely in its properties? Who can tell, except by this doctrine, but that the *substratum* of all matter is the same, and that all the difference which can be ascertained, consists merely in its properties? surely this was a wonderful discovery for the “*dark age*,” no discovery in the most enlightened age can equal this, and it should therefore redeem the character of the thirteenth century at least, from the imputation of ignorance and superstition.

By the Power of Chymical analysis the real substance of the bread, both before and after consecration, can be ascertained, as far as it is known, and as far as any matter of belief should be predicated of it.

It is wild and extravagant to rest an article of faith, (unless the truth of it be revealed) upon that which lies far beyond the reach of all human knowledge: and still more wild and extravagant does it become, when that on which the article of faith rests, is opposed and contradicted by all the knowledge we possess. Is it said that *faith* on the part of him that receives the bread is necessary to its becoming the body, blood, &c. of Christ? If so, then the consecration of the Priest does not occasion the change, but it is left entirely with those who receive it. Besides, the change in question cannot take place until it is eaten, for before this, it is uncertain whether or not it will be eaten in faith; so that the *intention* of the receiver of the Sacrament, may frustrate the *intention* of the Priest. Now if eating in faith be necessary to the existence of this change, why is the bread adored before it is eaten? Manifestly this is idolatry, for ac-

cording to this doctrine, until eaten, the change is not wrought. Again, if faith in the receiver be necessary to the miracle, it is wrought by the believer, not by the Priest. I mean wrought by the believer in the same sense in which miracles may be said to be wrought by the Apostles. Here we may ask why need the Priest consecrate the wafer at all, if the change depend entirely upon the faith of the receiver? why may not the believer eat a piece of common bread, and believe that he is eating the body and blood of Christ? Is it said he has no warrant from Scripture for so doing? what better warrant from Scripture has he for believing that what he eats after the consecration of the Priest, is flesh and blood? does scripture teach, if the Christian believes what he eats after consecration, to be the real body of Christ, that in such case, it is the real body? if so, point us to the passage. The efficacy of faith always depends upon a promise; but there is no promise on record in the scriptures, that if a person, while he takes this sacrament, only believe he is eating the body of Christ, that on the exercise of such faith, it shall be the body of Christ which he eats. If then there be no such promise, it might be said with equal propriety that whatever we can bring ourselves to believe, is certainly true: so that if a person will endeavour to masticate a stone, and only believe that it is flesh, it will be flesh; by which means many a starving Papist might satisfy his hunger on the way side, if it were not for this most important consideration, that it would require a vast deal more *faith* in this case to satisfy himself that it was true, than in the other.\*

\*This part of our subject reminds us of an anecdote which may serve to illustrate the point in hand. When Erasmus was in England, he had a controversy with Sir Thomas More. on the very subject now before us. Sir Thomas insisted that if you really believe that you receive the body and blood of Christ in the sacramental bread, then you do actually receive it. The dis-

There are some questions arising out of this doctrine of transubstantiation, which I should like to have answered by those who hold it: they are such as the following: 1: If you abstract the properties of bread and flesh, does any thing remain of which you can rationally and scientifically predicate a change? 2: After their properties are abstracted, would there be any difference between the flesh and the bread? 3: If you answer these questions in the affirmative, I desire to know by what means you obtained the information, and by what means you ascertain that a change is really effected? 4: Can that which has all the properties of bread be any thing else which is not bread? By this change it is held by Romanists, that the bread becomes the *body, blood, soul and divinity* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: 5: Can flesh and blood have all the properties of bread and not have one property peculiar to flesh, and yet be real, *bona fide* FLESH? 6: Can matter become Spirit, and yet retain all the properties of matter? 7: Abstracting the properties, what is the difference between matter and Spirit? 8: Can senseless matter become intelligent divinity? you perceive the question here is not whether

putants separated without coming to an agreement in sentiment; and when Erasmus was on his return to Holland, he borrowed of Sir Thomas a small horse called a *palfrey*, on which he rode to the water side; and instead of sending back the palfrey with the servant who accompanied him, he shipped him on board the same vessel that took himself to Holland, and sent back by the servant, the following lines to Sir Thomas:

Nonne memenisti  
 Quod mihi dixisti  
 De corpore Christi,  
 Crede quod edis, et edis?  
 Idem tibi scribo  
 De tuo palfrido,  
 Crede quod habes, et habes.

which may be thus translated: "Do you not remember what you said to me about the body of Christ, believe that you eat it, and you eat it? The same I write to you in regard to your palfrey, believe that you have him, and you really have him."

divinity can be infused into matter: But whether the matter ceases to be matter and becomes divinity? 9: Has the bread, after consecration, the power to create? 10: If it is divinity, has it all the attributes of divinity, viz: omnipotence, omniscience, &c. 11: Is the soul and divinity eaten? if not, what becomes of it? 12: If not eaten, why need the bread be changed into more than flesh and blood? 13: If eaten, does it ever separate from the matter? if so, when? i. e. does the consecrated host ever become senseless matter again? if so, when? 14: If not, where are all the Gods that have been thus produced? Oh! is it of my blessed Saviour that all these things are affirmed! Again, 15: Do we know any thing of matter, beyond its properties? 16: Is the change wrought in what we know nothing about? 17: How do I know then, that a change is wrought? does the church affirm it? How do I know that the church affirms the truth? 18: If, in repeating the form of consecration, the officiating Priest does not *intend* that a change shall be wrought, is it wrought? 19: Does not the change then, depend entirely upon the *intention* of the officiating Priest? 20: Does the bread, after consecration, become a prevalent intercessor with God? may it be worshipped as the SUPREME GOD? 21: Is this revealed in the scriptures? 22: Did the Apostles teach it? 23: Did martyrs die rather than renounce it? 24: Did the idolatrous Heathen persecute the primitive Christians for believing and teaching it? 25: Does the infallible church err in holding it to be an article of faith without belief in which there is no salvation? 26: Did the Lateran council in 1215, under Innocent III. settle all the points of natural science involved in this doctrine? If so, as little as I think of their theology, I should think less of their philosophy. 27: Is there a miracle on scripture record, which is not wrought in, and predicated of the properties of matter

or Spirit, 28: Do not these questions naturally arise out of the doctrine of transubstantiation. 29: Who will undertake to give such answers to them as shall not be unfavourable to this *fundamental doctrine*?

Now the proper and necessary consequence of this doctrine, says Tillotson, is to take away all certainty, and especially the certainty of sense: For if that which my sight and taste and touch do all assure me to be a little piece of wafer, may notwithstanding this, be flesh and blood, even the whole body of a man; then notwithstanding the greatest assurance that sense can give me, that any thing is this or that, it may be quite another thing from what sense reported it to be. If so, then farewell to the *Infallibility* of Tradition, which depends upon the certainty of sense: and which is a worse consequence, if this doctrine be admitted we can have no sufficient assurance that the christian doctrine is a divine revelation. For the assurance of that, depending upon the assurance we have of the miracles said to be wrought for the confirmation of it, and all the assurance we can have of a miracle, depending upon the certainty of our senses; it is very plain, that that doctrine which takes away the certainty of sense, does in so doing overthrow the certainty of the christian religion. And what can be more vain than to pretend, that a man may be assured that such a doctrine is revealed by God, and consequently true, which if it be true, a man can have no assurance at all of any divine revelation? Surely nothing is to be admitted by us as certain, which being admitted, we can be certain of nothing. It is a wonder that any man who considers the natural consequences of this doctrine can be a Papist; unless he have attained to Mr. Cressy's pitch of learning, who speaking of the difficult arguments wherewith this doctrine was pressed, says\* plainly, "I

\*Exomol. c. 73, Sect. 7.



must answer freely and ingenuously, that I have not learned to *answer* such arguments, but to *despise* them.” And if this be a good way, whenever we have a mind to believe any thing, to scorn those objections against it which we cannot solve; then the christian religion hath no advantage above the vilest enthusiasm; and a Turk may maintain Mahomet and his Alcoran (in opposition to Christ and his doctrine) against all that Grotius, or any other hath said, if he can but keep his countenance, and gravely say, *I have not learned to answer such arguments, but to despise them.*—*Tillotson’s Rule of Faith.*

Romanists with characteristic zeal for error, have endeavoured to press upon those protestants who hold to the divinity of Christ, the dilemma of either giving up that fundamental point, or receiving the doctrine of Transubstantiation, on the ground that there is a mystery in both. But Tillotson has well answered them on this point: in his discourse “concerning the unity of the divine nature” he says,

“Before I leave this argument, I cannot but take notice of one thing which they of the church of Rome are perpetually objecting to us upon this occasion. And it is this, that by the same reason that we believe the doctrine of the trinity, we may and must receive that of transubstantiation. God forbid: because of all the doctrines that ever were in any religion, this of transubstantiation is certainly the most abominably absurd.

However, this objection plainly shows how fondly and obstinately they are addicted to their own errors, how misshapen and monstrous soever; insomuch, that rather than the dictates of their church, how absurd soever, should be called in question, they will question the truth even of christianity itself; and if we will not take in transubstantiation, and admit it to be a necessary article of the christian faith, they grow so sullen and despe-

rate that they matter not what becomes of all the rest: And rather than not have their will of us in that which is controverted, they will give up that which by their own confession is an undoubted article of the christian faith, and not controverted on either side; except only by the Socinians, who yet are hearty enemies to transubstantiation, and have exposed the absurdity of it with great advantage.

But I shall endeavour to return a more particular answer to this objection, and such a one as I hope will satisfy every considerate and unprejudiced mind, that after all this confidence and swaggering of theirs, there is by no means equal reason either for the receiving or for the rejecting of these two doctrines of the trinity and transubstantiation.

1st, There is not equal reason for the belief of these two doctrines. This objection, if it be of any force, must suppose that there is equal evidence and proof from scripture for these two doctrines: But this we utterly deny, and with great reason; because it is no more evident from the words of scripture, that the sacramental bread is substantially changed into Christ's natural body by virtue of those words, "*This is my Body,*" than it is, that Christ is substantially changed into a natural Vine by virtue of those words,\* *I am the true Vine*; or than the Rock in the Wilderness, of which the Israelites drank, was substantially changed into the person of Christ, because it is expressly said, "*that rock was Christ*;" or than that the christian church is substantially changed into the natural body of Christ, because it is in express terms said of the church, that it is his body.†

But besides this, several of their most learned writers have freely acknowledged that transubstantiation can

\*Joh. 15, 1.

†Eph. 1, 23.

neither be directly proved, nor necessarily concluded from scripture: But this the writers of the christian church did never acknowledge concerning the trinity, and the divinity of Christ; but have always appealed to the clear and undeniable testimonies of scripture for the proof of these doctrines. And then the whole force of the objection amounts to this, that if I am bound to believe what I am sure God says, though I cannot comprehend it; then I am bound by the same reason to believe the greatest absurdity in the world, though I have no manner of assurance of any divine revelation concerning it. And if this be their meaning, though we understand not transubstantiation, yet we very well understand what they would have, but cannot grant it; because there is not equal reason to believe two things, for one of which there is good proof, and for the other no proof at all.

2d. Neither is there equal reason for the rejecting of these two doctrines. This the objection supposes, which yet cannot be supposed but upon one or both of these two grounds: Either because these two doctrines are equally *incomprehensible*, or because they are equally loaded with *Absurdities* and *Contradictions*.

The first is no good ground of rejecting any doctrine, merely because it is *incomprehensible*, as I have abundantly shewed already. But besides this, there is a wide difference between plain matters of sense, and mysteries concerning God; and it does by no means follow, that, if a man do once admit any thing concerning God which he cannot comprehend, he hath no reason afterwards to believe what he himself sees. This is a most unreasonable and destructive way of arguing, because it strikes at the foundation of all certainty, and sets every man at liberty to deny the most plain and evident truths of christianity, if he may not be humoured in having the

absurdest things in the world admitted for true. The next step will be to persuade us, that we may as well deny the being of God because his nature is *incomprehensible* by our *reason*, as deny transubstantiation because *it evidently contradicts* our *senses*.

2d. Nor are these two doctrines loaded with the like absurdities and contradictions: So far from this, that the doctrine of the trinity, as it is delivered in the scriptures, and hath already been explained, hath no absurdity or contradiction either involved in it, or necessarily consequent upon it: But the doctrine of transubstantiation is big with all imaginable absurdity and contradiction. And their own schoolmen have sufficiently exposed it; especially Scotus, and he designed to do so, as any man that attentively reads him may plainly discover: For in his disputation about it, he treats this doctrine with the greatest contempt, as a new invention of the council of Lateran under Pope Innocent III. To the decree of which council concerning it, he seems to pay a formal submission, but really derides it as contrary to the common sense and reason of mankind, and not at all supported by scripture; as any one may easily discern that will carefully consider his manner of handling it and the result of his whole disputation about it.

And now suppose there were some appearance of absurdity and contradiction in the doctrine of the trinity as it is delivered in scripture, must we therefore believe a doctrine which is not at all revealed in scripture, and which hath certainly in it, all the absurdities in the world, and all the contradictions to sense and reason; and which once admitted, doth at once destroy all certainty? Yes, say they, why not? since we of the church of Rome are satisfied that this doctrine is revealed in scripture; or, if it be not, is defined by the church, which is every whit as good. But is this equal, to demand of us the belief of

a thing which hath always been controverted, not only between us and them, but even among themselves, at least till the council of Trent? And this upon such unreasonable terms, that we must either yield this point to them or else renounce a doctrine agreed on both sides to be revealed in scripture.

To shew the unreasonableness of this proceeding, let us suppose a priest of the church of Rome pressing a Jew or Turk to the belief of transubstantiation, and because one kindness deserves another, the Jew or Turk should demand of him the belief of all the fables in the Talmud, or in the Alcoran; since none of these, nor indeed all of them together, are near so absurd as transubstantiation: Would not this be much more reasonable and equal than what they demand of us? Since no absurdity, how monstrous and big soever, can be thought of, which may not enter into an understanding in which a breach hath been already made, wide enough to admit transubstantiation. The priests of Baal did not half so much deserve to be exposed by the Prophet for their superstition and folly, as the priests of the church of Rome do for this senseless and stupid doctrine of theirs with a hard name. I shall only add this one thing more, that if this doctrine were possible to be true, and clearly proved to be so; yet it would be evidently useless and to no purpose. For it pretends to change the substance of one thing into the substance of another thing that is already, and before <sup>this</sup> change is pretended to be made. But to what purpose? Not to make the body of Christ, for that was already an being; and the substance of the bread is lost, nothing of it remaineth but accidents, which are good for nothing, and indeed are nothing when the substance is destroyed and gone."



A

**DISCOURSE**

AGAINST

**TRANSUBSTANTIATION:**

BY

✓  
**ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.**

“ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON was truly and seriously religious, but without affectation, bigotry, or superstition; his notions of morality were fine and sublime; his thread of reasoning was easy, clear and solid. He was not only the best preacher of the age, but seemed to have brought preaching to perfection: his sermons were so well heard and liked, and so much read, that all the nation proposed him as a pattern, and studied to copy after him.”

*Bp. Burnet's Hist. of his own time, vol. iv. p. 96.*

**TRANSUBSTANTIATION.**

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CONCERNING the sacrament of the Lord's supper, one of the two great positive institutions of the Christian religion, there are two main points of difference between us and the church of Rome. One about the doctrine of transubstantiation; in which they think, but are not certain, that they have the scripture and the words of our Saviour on their side: the other, about the administration of this sacrament to the people in both kinds; in which we are sure that we have the scripture and our Saviour's institution on our side, and that so plainly that our adversaries themselves do not deny it.

Of the first of these I shall now treat, and endeavour to show against the church of Rome, *that in this sacrament there is no substantial change made of the elements of bread and wine into the natural body and blood of Christ*; that body which was born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered upon the cross; for so they explain that hard word transubstantiation.

Before I engage in this argument, I cannot but observe what an unreasonable task we are put upon, by the bold confidence of our adversaries, to dispute a matter of sense; which is one of those things about which Aristotle hath long since pronounced there ought to be no dispute.

It might well seem strange if any man should write a book, to prove that an *egg* is not an *elephant*, and that a *musket ball* is not a *pike*: It is every whit as hard a case to be put to maintain by a long discourse, that what we

see and handle and taste to be *bread*, is *bread* and not the *body of a man*; and what we see and taste to be *wine*, is *wine* and not *blood*: and if this evidence may not pass for sufficient without any farther proof, I do not see why any man, that hath confidence enough to do so, may not deny any thing to be what all the world sees it is; or affirm any thing to be what all the world sees it is not: and this without all possibility of being further confuted, So that the business of transubstantiation is not a controversy of scripture against scripture, or of reason against reason, but of downright impudence against the plain meaning of scripture, and all the sense and reason of mankind.

It is a most self-evident falsehood; and there is no doctrine or proposition in the world that is of itself more evidently true, than transubstantiation is evidently false: and yet if it were possible to be true, it would be the most ill-natured and pernicious truth in the world, because it would suffer nothing else to be true; it is like the Roman Catholic church, which will needs be the whole Christian church, and will allow no other society of Christians to be any part of it: so transubstantiation, if it be true at all, it is all truth, and nothing else is true; for it cannot be true unless our senses, and the senses of all mankind be deceived about their proper objects; and if this be true and certain, then nothing else can be so; for if we be not certain of what we see, we can be certain of nothing.

And yet notwithstanding all this, there are a company of men in the world so abandoned and given up by God to the efficacy of delusion, as in good earnest to believe this gross and palpable error, and to impose the belief of it upon the Christian world under no less penalties than a temporal death and eternal damnation. And therefore, to undeceive, if possible, these deluded souls, it

will be necessary to examine the pretended grounds of so false a doctrine, and to lay open the monstrous absurdity of it.

And in the handling of this argument, I shall proceed in this plain method.

I. I shall consider the pretended grounds and reasons of the church of Rome for this doctrine.

II. I shall produce our objections against it. And if I can shew that there is no tolerable ground for it, and that there are invincible objections against it, then every man is not only in reason excused from believing this doctrine, but hath great cause to believe the contrary.

FIRST, I will consider the pretended grounds and reasons of the church of Rome for this doctrine. Which must be one or more of these five. Either 1st, The authority of scripture. Or 2dly, The perpetual belief of this doctrine in the Christian church, as an evidence that they always understood and interpreted our Saviour's words, "*This is my body*," in this sense. Or 3dly, The authority of the present church to make and declare new articles of faith. Or 4thly, The absolute necessity of such a change as this in the sacrament to the comfort and benefit of those who receive this sacrament. Or 5thly, To magnify the power of the priest in being able to work so great a miracle.

1st. They pretend for this doctrine the authority of scripture in those words of our Saviour, "*This is my body*." Now to shew the insufficiency of this pretence, I shall endeavour to make good these two things.

1. That there is no necessity of understanding those words of our Saviour in the sense of transubstantiation.

2. That there is a great deal of reason, nay that it is very absurd and unreasonable, to understand them otherwise.

First, That there is no necessity to understand those



words of the Saviour in the sense of transubstantiation. If there be any, it must be from one of these two reasons. Either because there are no figurative expressions in scripture, which I think no man ever yet said: Or else, because a sacrament admits of no figures; which would be very absurd for any man to say, since it is of the very nature of a sacrament to represent and exhibit some invisible grace and benefit by an outward sign and figure: and especially since it cannot be denied, but that in the institution of this very sacrament our Saviour useth figurative expressions, and several words which cannot be taken strictly and literally. When he gave the cup he said, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins." Where first, the *cup* is put for the *wine* contained in the *cup*; or else if the words be literally taken, so as to signify a substantial change, it is not of the *wine*, but of the *cup*; and that, not into the *blood of Christ*, but into the *New Testament* or *New Covenant* in his blood. Besides, that his blood is said then to be shed, and his body to be broken, which was not till his passion, which followed the institution and first celebration of this sacrament.

But that there is no necessity to understand our Saviour's words in the sense of transubstantiation, I will take the plain concession of a great number of the most learned writers of the church of Rome in this controversy, Bellarmine,\* Suarez,† and Vasquez,‡ do acknowledge Scotus the great schoolman to have said that this doctrine cannot be evidently proved from scripture: and Bellarmine grants this not to be improbable; and Suarez and Vasquez acknowledge Durandus|| to have

\* De Euch. l. 3, c. 23. † In 3 dis. 49, Qu. 75, Sect. 2.

‡ In 3. part. disp. 180. Qu. 75, art. 2. c. 15.

|| In Sent. l. 4. dist. 11. Qu. 1. n. 15.

said as much. Ocham,\* another famous schoolman, says expressly, “that the doctrine which holds the substance of the bread and wine to remain after consecration is *neither repugnant to reason nor to scripture.*” Petrus ab Alliaco,† Cardinal of Cambray, says plainly, that “the doctrine of the substance of bread and wine remaining after consecration, is more easy and free from absurdity, more rational, and *no ways repugnant to the authority of scripture;*” nay more, that for the other doctrine, viz. of transubstantiation, “*there is no evidence in scripture.*” Gabriel Biel,‡ another great schoolman and divine of their church, freely declares, that “as to any thing expressed in the canon of the scriptures, a man may believe that the substance of bread and wine doth remain after consecration:” and therefore he resolves the belief of transubstantiation into some other revelation, besides scripture, which he supposeth the church had about it. Cardinal Cajetan|| confesseth that “the gospel doth not here express that the bread is changed into the body of Christ; that we have this from the authority of the church:” nay, he goes farther, “that there is *nothing in the gospel* which enforceth any man to understand these words of Christ, “*this is my body,*” in a proper and not in a metaphorical sense; but the church having understood them in a proper sense they are to be so explained:” which words in the Roman edition of Cajetan, are expunged by order of Pope Pius V.§ Cardinal Contarenus,¶ and Melchoir Canus,\*\* one of the best and most judicious writers that church ever had, reckon this doctrine among those *which are not so ex-*

\* In 4. Sent. Q. 5. & Quodl. 4. Q. 3. † In 4. Sent. Q. 6. art. 2.

‡ In canon Miss. Lect. 40.

|| In Aquin. 3. part Qu. 75. art. 1.

§ Ægid. Conick. de Sacram. Q. 75. art. 1. n. 13.

¶ De Sacram. l. 2. c. 3. \*\* Loc. Theolog. l. 3. c. 3.

*pressly found in scripture.* I will add but one more of great authority in the church, and a reputed martyr, Fisher,\* Bishop of Rochester, who ingenuously confesseth that in the words of the institution, *there is not one word from whence the true presence of the flesh and blood of Christ in our mass can be proved:* so that we need not much contend that this doctrine hath no certain foundation in scripture, when this is so fully and frankly acknowledged by our adversaries themselves.

Secondly, If there be no necessity of understanding our Saviour's words in the sense of transubstantiation, I am sure there is a great deal of reason to understand them otherwise. Whether we consider the like expressions in scripture, as where our Saviour says he is *the door* and the *true vine* (which the church of Rome would mightily have triumphed in, had it been said, this is my true body.) And so likewise where the church is said to be Christ's body, and the rock which followed the Israelites to be Christ.† “They drank of that rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ:” all which, and innumerable more like expressions in scripture, every man understands in a figurative, and not in a strictly literal and absurd sense. And it is very well known, that in the Hebrew language things are commonly said to be that which they do signify and represent; and there is not in that language a more proper and usual way of expressing a thing to signify so and so, than to say that it is so and so. Thus Joseph expounding Pharaoh's dream to him, says, “the seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears of corn are seven years,‡” that is, they signified or represented seven years of plenty; and so Pharaoh understood him, and so would any man of sense understand the like expressions; nor

\* Contra. captiv. Babylon. c. 10. n. 2. † 1 Cor. x. 4.

‡ Gen. xli. 26.

do I believe that any sensible man who had never heard of transubstantiation being grounded upon these words of our Saviour, "this is my body," would, upon reading the institution of the sacrament in the gospel ever have imagined any such thing to be meant by our Saviour in those words; but would have understood his meaning to have been *this bread* SIGNIFIES my *body*, this *cup* SIGNIFIES my *blood*; and this which you see me now do, do ye hereafter for a memorial of me. But surely it would never have entered into any man's mind to have thought that our Saviour did literally hold himself in his hand, and give himself for himself with his own hands. Or whether we compare these words of our Saviour with the ancient form of the Passover used by the Jews from Ezra's time, as Justin Martyr\* tells us, *το το ποχα ο σωτηρ ημων και η καταφυγη ημων*, "this Passover is our Saviour and our refuge." Not that they believed the Pascal Lamb to be substantially changed either into God their Saviour, who delivered them out of the land of Egypt, or into the Messiah the Saviour whom they expected and who was signified by it: But this lamb which they did eat, did represent to them, and put them in mind of that salvation which God wrought for their fathers in Egypt, when by the slaying of a lamb and sprinkling the blood of it upon their doors, their first-born were passed over and spared; and did likewise foreshew the salvation of Messiah, the lamb of God that was to take away the sins of the world.

And nothing is more common in all languages than to give the name of the thing signified to the sign: as the delivery of a deed or writing under hand and seal is called a conveyance, or making over such an estate, and it is really so; not the delivery of mere wax and parchment, but the conveyance of a real estate, as truly and

\* Dialog. cum. Tryp. p. 297. Edit. Paris. 1639.

really, to all effects and purposes of law, as if the very material houses and lands themselves could be, and were actually delivered into my hands: in like manner, the names of the things themselves made over to us in the new covenant of the gospel between God and man, are given to the signs or seals of that covenant. By baptism Christians are said to be *made partakers of the Holy Ghost*. Heb. vi. 4. And by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we are said to communicate, or to be made partakers of the body of Christ which was broken, and of his blood which was shed for us, that is, of the real benefits of his death and passion. And thus St. Paul speaks of this sacrament: (1 Cor. x. 16.) "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" But still it is *bread*, and he still calls it so: (v. 17.) "For we being many, are one bread and one body; for we are partakers of that one bread." The church of Rome might, if they pleased, as well argue from hence, that all Christians are substantially changed first into bread, and then into the natural body of Christ, by their participation of this sacrament, because they are said thereby to be *one bread* and *one body*. And the same Apostle in the next chapter, after he had spoken of the consecration of the elements, still calls them the *bread* and the *cup*, in three verses together: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup." v. 26. "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily." v. 27. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." v. 28. And our Saviour himself, when he had said, "This is my blood of the New Testament," immediately adds, "But I say unto you, I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine, until I drink it new with you in my Father's king-



dom;”\* that is, not till after his resurrection, which was the first step of his exaltation into the kingdom given him by his Father, when the scripture tells us he did eat and drink with his disciples. But that which I observe from our Saviour’s words, is, that after the consecration of the cup, and the delivering of it to his disciples to drink of it, he tells them that he would thenceforth drink no more of that fruit of the vine, which he had now drank with them, till after his resurrection. From whence it is plain that it was the *fruit of the vine*, real wine, which our Saviour drank of, and communicated to his disciples in the sacrament.

Besides, if we consider that he celebrated this sacrament before his passion, it is impossible that these words should be understood literally of the natural body and blood of Christ; because it was *his body broken* and *his blood shed* which he gave to his disciples, which if we understand literally of his natural body broken and his blood shed, then these words, “This is my body which is broken, and this is my blood which is shed,” could not be true, because his body was then *whole* and *unbroken*, and his blood not then shed; nor could it be a *propitiatory sacrifice* (as they affirm this sacrament to be) unless they will say that propitiation was made before Christ suffered: and it is likewise impossible that the disciples should understand these words literally, because they not only plainly saw that what he gave them was bread and wine, but they saw likewise as plainly that it was not his body which was given, but his body which gave that which was given; not his body broken and his blood shed, because they saw him alive at that very time, and beheld his body whole and unpierced; and, therefore, they could not understand the words literally: if they did, can we imagine that the

\* Matthew, xxvi. 29.

disciples, who upon all other occasions were so full of questions and objections, should make no difficulty of this matter? nor so much as ask our Saviour, *how* can these things be? that they should not tell him, we see this to be bread and that to be wine, and we see thy body to be distinct from both; we see thy body not broken, and thy blood not shed.

From all which it must needs be very evident, to any man that will impartially consider things, how little reason there is to understand those words of our Saviour, "This is my body, and this is my blood," in the sense of transubstantiation; nay, on the contrary, that there is very great reason and an evident necessity to understand them otherwise. I proceed to show,

Secondly, That this doctrine is not grounded upon the *perpetual belief of the Christian Church*, which the church of Rome vainly pretends as an evidence that the church did always understand and interpret our Saviour's words in this sense.

To manifest the groundlessness of this pretence, I shall,  
1. Show by plain testimony of the fathers in several ages, that this doctrine was not the belief of the ancient Christian church. 2. I shall show the time and occasion of its coming in, and by what degrees it grew up and was established in the Roman church. 3. I shall answer their great pretended demonstration, that this always was and must have been the constant belief of the Christian church.

1. I shall show by plain testimonies of the fathers in several ages, for above five hundred years after Christ, that this doctrine was not the belief of the ancient Christian church. I deny not but the fathers do, and that with very great reason, very much magnify the wonderful mystery and efficacy of this sacrament, and frequently speak of a great supernatural change made by

the divine benediction; which we also readily acknowledge. They say indeed, that the elements of bread and wine do by the divine blessing become to us the body and blood of Christ: but they likewise say, that the names of the things signified are given to the signs; that the bread and wine do still remain in their proper nature and substance, and that they are turned into the substance of our bodies; that the body of Christ in the sacrament is *not* his natural body, but the *sign* and *figure* of it; not that body which was crucified, nor that blood which was shed upon the cross; and that it is impious to understand the eating of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinking his blood, literally: all which are directly opposite to the doctrine of transubstantiation, and utterly inconsistent with it. I will select some few testimonies of many things which I might bring to this purpose.

I begin with Justin Martyr,\* who says expressly that “our blood and flesh are nourished by the conversion of that food which we receive in the eucharist:” but that cannot be the natural body and blood of Christ, for no man will say that that is converted into the nourishment of our bodies.

The second is Irenæus,† who speaking of this sacrament says, that the “bread which is from the earth, receiving the divine invocation, is now no longer common bread, but the eucharist (or sacrament) consisting of two things, the one earthly, the other heavenly.” He says it is no longer common bread, but after invocation or consecration, it becomes the sacrament, that is, *bread sanctified*, consisting of two things, an earthly and an heavenly; the earthly thing is bread, and the heavenly is the divine blessing, which by the invocation or consecration is added to it. And elsewhere‡ he hath this

\* Apol. 2 p. 98. Edit. Paris, 1636.

† Lib. 4. c. 34.

‡ Lib. 5. c. 21.

passage, “When therefore the cup that is mixed, (that is, of wine and water,) and the bread that is broken, receives the word of God, it becomes the eucharist of the blood and body of Christ, of which the substance of our flesh is increased and consists;” but if that which we receive in the sacrament do nourish our bodies, it must be bread and wine, and not the natural body and blood of Christ. There is another remarkable testimony of Irenæus, which though it be not now extant in those works of his which remain, yet hath been preserved by Oecumenius,\* and it is this: “When (says he) the Greeks had taken some servants of the Christian catechumeni, (that is, such as had not been admitted to the sacrament,) and afterwards urged them by violence to tell them some of the secrets of the Christians, these servants having nothing to say that might gratify those who offered violence to them, except only that they had heard from their masters, that the divine communion was the blood and body of Christ, they thinking that it was really blood and flesh, declared as much to those that questioned them. The Greeks taking this as if it were really done by the Christians, discovered it to others of the Greeks; who hereupon put Sanctus and Blandina to the torture to make them confess it. To whom Blandina boldly answered, ‘How could they endure to do this, who by way of exercise (or abstinence) do not eat that flesh which may lawfully be eaten?’” By which it appears, that this which they would have charged upon Christians, as if they had literally eaten the flesh and blood of Christ in the sacrament, was a false accusation, which these martyrs denied, saying they were so far from that, that they for their part did not eat any flesh at all. (*See note D, in the Appendix.*)

The next is Tertullian, who proves against Marcion

\* Com. in 1 Pet. c. 3.

the heretic, that the body of our Saviour was not a mere phantasm and appearance, but a real body, because the sacrament is a *figure* and *image* of his body; and if there be an image of his body he must have a real body, otherwise the sacrament would be an *image* of an *image*. His words are these: "The bread which our Saviour took and distributed to his disciples, he made his own body, saying 'this is my body,' that is, the IMAGE OR FIGURE of my body. But it could not have been the FIGURE of his body, if there had not been a true and real body."\* And arguing against the sceptics, who denied the certainty of sense, he useth this argument: That if we question our senses, we may doubt whether our blessed Saviour were not deceived in what he heard, and saw, and touched. "He might (says he) be deceived in the voice from Heaven, in the smell of the ointment with which he was annointed against his burial, and in the taste of the wine which he consecrated in remembrance of his blood."† So that it seems we are to trust our senses, even in the matter of the sacrament: and if that be true, the doctrine of transubstantiation is certainly false.

Origen,‡ in his Comment on Matth. xv., speaking of the sacrament hath this passage: "That food which is sanctified by the word of God and prayer; as to that of it which is material, goeth into the belly and is cast out into the draught," which none will surely say of the body of Christ. And afterwards he adds, by way of explication, "It is not the matter of the bread, but the words which are spoken over it, which profiteth him that worthily eateth the Lord; and this (he says) he had spoken concerning the TYPICAL and SYMBOLICAL BODY." So that the matter of bread remaineth in the sacrament, and this, Origen calls the *typical* and *symbolical* body of

\* Advers. Marcionem, l. 4. p. 571. Edit. Rigal. Paris, 1634.

† Lib. de Anima, p. 319.      ‡ Edit. Huetii.



Christ; and it is not the natural body of Christ which is there eaten; for the food eaten in the sacrament, as to that of it which is material, goeth into the belly and is cast out into the draught. This testimony is so very plain in the cause, that Sextus Senensis suspects this place of Origen was depraved by the heretics. Cardinal Perron is contented to allow it to be Origen's, but rejects his testimony because he was accused of heresy by some of the fathers, and says he *talks like a heretic* in this place. So that with much ado this testimony is yielded to us. The same father, in his Homilies upon Leviticus,\* speaks thus: "There is also in the New Testament, a letter which kills him who doth not spiritually understand those things which are said; for if we take according to the letter that which is said, EXCEPT YE EAT MY FLESH AND DRINK MY BLOOD, this letter kills." And this also is a *killing* testimony, and not to be answered but in Cardinal Perron's way, by saying "*he talks like a heretic.*"

St. Cyprian hath a whole Epistle to Cecilius,† against those who gave the communion in water only without wine mingled with it; and his main argument against them is this, that "the blood of Christ with which we are redeemed and quickened cannot seem to be in the cup, when there is no wine in the cup by which the blood of Christ is *represented*." And afterwards he says, that "contrary to the evangelical and apostolical doctrine, water was in some places offered (or given) in the Lord's cup, which" (says he) "alone cannot express (or represent) the blood of Christ." And lastly he tells us, that "by water the people is understood, by wine the blood of Christ is shown, (or represented,) but when in the cup water is mingled with wine, the people are united to Christ." So that, according to this argument, wine

\* Cap. 10. † Ep. 65.

in the sacramental cup is no otherwise changed into the blood of Christ, than the water mixed with it is changed into the people; which are said to be united to Christ.

I omit many others, and pass to St. Austin, in the fourth age after Christ. And I the rather insist upon his testimony, because of his eminent esteem and authority in the Latin church; and he also calls the elements of the sacrament, the "*figure and sign of Christ's body and blood.*" In his book against Adamantus the manichee, we have this expression: "Our Lord did not doubt to say, this is my body, when he gave the SIGN of his body."\* And in his explication of the third psalm, speaking of Judas whom our Lord admitted to his last supper, "in which (says he) he commended and delivered to his disciples the FIGURE of his body:"† language which would now be censured for heresy in the church of Rome. Indeed he was never accused of heresy, as Cardinal Perron says Origen was, but he talks as like one, as Origen himself. And in his comment on the 98th psalm, speaking of the offence which the disciples took at that saying of our Saviour, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood," &c., he brings in our Saviour speaking thus to them: "Ye must understand SPIRITUALLY, what I have said unto you; ye are NOT TO EAT THIS BODY which YE SEE, and to drink THAT BLOOD which shall be shed by those that shall crucify me. I have commended a certain sacrament to you, which being spiritually understood will give you life."‡ What more opposite to the doctrine of transubstantiation, than that the disciples were not to eat that body of Christ which they saw, nor to drink that blood which was shed upon the cross, but that all this was to be understood spiritually, and according to the nature of a sacrament?

\* Aug. Tom. 6. p. 187. Edit. Basil, 1596.

† Enarrat. in Psal. Tom. 8. p. 16.    ‡ Id. Tom. 9. p. 1105.

for that body, he tells us, is not here but in Heaven, in his comment upon these words, “Me ye have not always:” “He speaks (says he) of the presence of his body: ye shall have me according to my providence, according to majesty and invisible grace; but according to the flesh which the word assumed, according to that which was born of the Virgin Mary, ye shall not have me: therefore, because he conversed with his disciples forty days, he is ascended up into Heaven, and is not here.”\*

In his twenty-third Epistle:† “If the sacrament (says he) had not some resemblance of those things whereof they are sacraments, they would not be sacraments at all; but from this resemblance they take for the most part the names of the things which they REPRESENT. Therefore, as the sacrament of the body of Christ is, in some manner or sense, Christ’s body, and the sacrament of his blood is the blood of Christ; so the sacrament of faith (meaning baptism) is faith.” Upon which works of St. Austin, there is this remarkable gloss in their own canon law:‡ “The heavenly sacrament, which truly represents the flesh of Christ, is called the body of Christ, but improperly: whence it is said, that after a manner, but not according to the truth of the thing, but the mystery of the thing, signified; so that the meaning is, it is called the body of Christ, that is, it signifies the body of Christ.” And if this be St. Austin’s meaning, I am sure no Protestant can speak more plainly against transubstantiation. And in the ancient canon of the mass, before it was changed in compliance with this new doctrine, it is expressly called a sacrament, *a sign*, *an image*, and *a figure* of Christ’s body, To which I will add that remarkable passage of St. Austin, cited by

\* Id. Tract. 50. in Joan. † Id. Tom. 2. p. 93.

‡ De Consecrat. dist. 2. Hoc est.

Gratian:\* “That as we receive the similitude of his death in baptism, so we may also receive the LIKENESS of his flesh and blood, that so neither may truth be wanting in the sacrament, nor Pagans have occasion to make us ridiculous for drinking the blood of one that was slain.”

I will mention but one testimony more of this father, but so clear a one, as it is impossible that any man in his wits that had believed transubstantiation could have uttered. It is in his Treatise “*de doctrina Christiana*,”† where laying down several rules for the right understanding of scripture, he gives this for one: “If (says he) the speech be a precept forbidding some heinous wickedness or crime, or commanding us to do good, it is not figurative; but if it seem to command any heinous wickedness or crime, or to forbid that which is profitable or beneficial to others, it is figurative. For example, ‘Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.’ This seems to command a heinous wickedness and crime, therefore, it is a FIGURE; commanding us to communicate of the passion of our Lord, and with delight and advantage to lay up in our memory that his flesh was crucified and wounded for us.” So that, according to St. Austin’s best skill in interpreting scripture, the *literal* eating of the flesh of Christ, and drinking his blood, would have been a great impiety; and therefore, the expression is to be understood *figuratively*; not as Cardinal Perron would have it, only in opposition to the eating of his flesh and blood in the gross appearance of flesh and blood, but to the real eating of his natural body and blood under any appearance whatsoever: for St. Austin does not say, that this is a figurative speech, wherein we are com-

\* De Consecrat. dist. 2. Sect. Utrum.

† Lib. 3. Tom. 3. p. 53.

manded really to feed upon the natural body and blood of Christ, under the species of bread and wine, as the Cardinal would understand him; for then the speech would be literal and not figurative: but he says, this is a *figurative* speech, wherein we are commanded *spiritually* to feed upon the remembrance of his passion.

To these I will add but three or four testimonies more, in the two following ages.

The first shall be of Theodoret, who speaking of that prophecy of Jacob\* concerning our Saviour, “he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes,” hath these words: “As we call the mystical fruit of the vine (that is, the wine in the sacrament) after consecration the blood of the Lord, so he (viz. Jacob) calls the blood of the true vine (viz. of Christ) the blood of the grape:”† but the blood of Christ is not literally and properly, but only figuratively, the blood of the grape, in the same sense as he is said to be the true vine; and, therefore, the wine in the sacrament after consecration is in like manner not literally and properly, but figuratively, the blood of Christ. And he explains this afterwards, saying that “our Saviour changed the names, and gave to his body the name of the symbol or sign, and to that symbol or sign the name of his body; thus when he called himself the vine, he called the symbol or sign his blood:” so that in the same sense that he called himself the vine, he called the wine, which is the symbol of his blood, his blood: “For (says he) he would have those who partake of the divine mysteries, not to attend to the nature of the things which are seen, but by the change of names to believe the change which is made by Grace; for he who called that which by nature is a body, wheat and bread, and again likewise called himself the vine, he honoured the symbols with the name

\* Gen. 49. 11.

† Dialogue 1.



of his body and blood; not changing nature, but adding grace to nature." Where you see he says expressly, that when he called the symbols or elements of the sacrament, viz. bread and wine, his body and blood, he made no change in the nature of the things, only added grace to nature, that is, by the divine grace and blessing he raised them to a spiritual and supernatural virtue and efficacy.

The second is of the same Theodoret, in his second dialogue between a Catholic under the name of Orthodoxus, and a Heretic under the name of Eranistes; who maintaining that the humanity of Christ was changed into the substance of the divinity, (which was the heresy of Eutyches,) he illustrates the matter by this similitude: "As (says he) the symbols of the Lord's body and blood are one thing before the invocation of the priest, but after the invocation are changed and become another thing; so the body of our Lord, after his ascension, is changed into the divine substance." But what says the Catholic orthodoxus to this? why, he talks just like one of Cardinal Perron's heretics: "Thou art (says he) caught in thine own net, because the mystical symbols after consecration *do not pass out of their own nature*; for they remain in their former substance, figure and appearance, and may be seen and handled even as before." He does not only deny the outward figure and appearance of the symbols to be changed, but the nature and substance of them, even in the proper and strictest sense of the word substance; and it was necessary so to do, otherwise he had not given a pertinent answer to the similitude urged against him.

The next is one of their own popes, Gelasius, who brings the same instance against the Eutychians:\* "Surely (says he) the sacraments which we receive of

\* Biblioth. Pat. Tom. 4.

the body and blood of our Lord are a divine thing, so that by them we are made partakers of a divine nature, and yet it *ceaseth not to be the substance* or nature of bread and wine; and certainly the *image* and *resemblance* of Christ's body and blood, are celebrated in the action of the mysteries;" that is, in the sacrament. To make this instance of any force against the Eutychians, who held that the body of Christ upon his ascension ceased, and was changed into the substance of his divinity, it was necessary to deny that there was any substantial change in the sacrament of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. So that here is an *infallible* authority, one of their own popes, expressly against transubstantiation.

The last testimony I shall produce is of Facundus, an African Bishop, who lived in the sixth century. Upon occasion of justifying an expression of one who had said that "Christ also received the adoption of sons," he reasons thus:\* "Christ vouchsafed to receive the sacrament of adoption, both when he was circumcised and baptised: and the sacrament of adoption may be called adoption, as the sacrament of his body and blood, which is in the consecrated bread and cup, is by us called his body and blood; *not that the bread* (says he) *is properly his body, and the cup his blood;* but because they contain in them the mysteries of his body and blood: hence our Lord himself called the blessed bread and cup, which he gave to his disciples, his body and blood." Can any man after this believe, that it was then, and had ever been, the universal and received doctrine of the Christian church, that the bread and wine in the sacrament, are substantially changed into the proper and natural body and blood of Christ?

By these plain testimonies which I have produced,

\* Facund. p. 144. Edit. Paris, 1676.

and I might have brought a great many more to the same purpose, it is I think evident beyond all denial, that transubstantiation has not been the perpetual belief of the Christian church. And this likewise, is acknowledged by many great and learned men of the Roman church. Scotus\* acknowledgeth, that this doctrine was not always thought necessary to be believed, but that the necessity of believing it was consequent to that declaration of the church, made in the Council of Lateran, under Pope Innocent III. And Durandus† freely discovers his inclination *to have believed the contrary, if the Church had not by that determination obliged men to believe it.* Tonstal,‡ Bishop of Durham, also yields, that *before the Lateran Council* men were at liberty as to the manner of Christ's presence in the sacrament. And Erasmus,|| who lived and died in the communion of the Roman church, and than whom no man was better read in the ancient fathers, doth confess that it was *late before the Church defined transubstantiation, unknown to the ancients, both name and thing.* And Alphonsus a Castro§ says plainly, that “concerning the transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Christ, *there is seldom any mention in the ancient writers.*” And who can imagine, that these learned men would have granted the ancient church and fathers, to have been so much strangers to this doctrine, had they thought it to have been the perpetual belief of the Church? I shall now, in the

Second place, give an account of the *particular time*

\* In sent. l. 4. dist. 11. q. 3.

† In sent. l. 4. dist. 11. q. 1. n. 15.

‡ De Euchar. l. 1. p. 146.

§ In 1 Epist. ad. Corinth. c. 7. citante etiam Salmerone, Tom. 9. Tract. 16. p. 108.

|| De Hæres. l. 8.

*and occasion of the coming in of this doctrine, and by what steps and degrees it grew up and was advanced into an article of faith in the Romish church. The doctrine of the corporeal presence of Christ was first started upon occasion of the dispute about the worship of images, in opposition whereto the synod of Constantinople about the year 750 did argue thus, that our Lord having left us no other image of himself but the sacrament, in which the substance of bread is the *image* of his body, we ought to make no other image of our Lord. In answer to this argument, the second council of Nice, in the year 787, did declare, that the sacrament after consecration is not the image and anti-type of Christ's body and blood, but is properly his body and blood. So that the corporeal presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament was first brought in to support the stupid worship of images: and indeed it could never have come in upon a more proper occasion, nor have been applied to a fitter purpose.*

And here I cannot but take notice how well this agrees with Bellarmine's\* observation, "that none of the ancients who wrote of heresies, hath put this error, (viz. of denying transubstantiation,) in his catalogue; nor did any of the ancients dispute against this error for the first 600 years." Which is very true, because there could be no occasion then to dispute against those who denied transubstantiation, since, as I have shewn, this doctrine was not in being, unless among the Eutychian heretics, for the first 600 years and more. But Bellarmine† goes on and tells us, that "the first who called in question the truth of the body of the Lord in the Eucharist were the *ICONOMACHI*, (the opposers of images,) after the year 700, in the council of Constantinople; for these said there was one image of Christ instituted by Christ him-

\* De Euchar. l. 1. c. 1.

† Ibid.

self, viz: the bread and wine in the Eucharist, which represents the body and blood of Christ: wherefore from that time the Greek writers often admonish us that the Eucharist is not the figure or image of the body of the Lord, but his true body, as appears from the VII. Synod;" which agrees most exactly with the account which I have given of the first rise of this doctrine, which began with the corporeal presence of Christ in the sacrament, and afterwards proceeded to transubstantiation.

And as this was the first occasion of introducing this doctrine among the Greeks, so in the Latin or Roman church, Paschasius Radbertus, first a monk, and afterwards abbot of Corbey, was the first broacher of it in the year 818.

And for this, besides the evidence of history, we have the acknowledgment of two very eminent persons in the church of Rome, Bellarmine and Sirmondus, who do in effect confess that this Paschasius was the first who wrote to purpose upon this argument. Bellarmine,\* in these words, "this author was the first who hath seriously and copiously written concerning the truth of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist." And Sirmondus† in these, "He so first explained the genuine sense of the Catholic church, that he opened the way to the rest who afterwards in great numbers wrote upon the same argument." But though Sirmondus is pleased to say that he only first explained the sense of the Catholic church in this point, yet it is very plain from the records of that age which are left to us, that this was the first time that this doctrine was broached in the Latin church; and it met with great opposition in that age, as I shall have occasion hereafter to shew. For Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mentz, about the year 847, reciting the very

\* De Scriptor Eccles.

† In vita Paschasii.



words of Paschasius, wherein he had delivered this doctrine, hath this remarkable passage concerning the novelty of it. “Some,” says he, “of late *not having a right opinion* concerning the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, have said that this is the body and blood of our Lord, which was born of the virgin Mary, and in which our Lord suffered upon the cross and rose from the dead: *which error*,” says he, “we have opposed with all our might.” From whence it is plain, by the testimony of one of the greatest and most learned bishops of that age, and of eminent reputation for piety, that what is now the very doctrine of the church of Rome concerning the sacrament, was then esteemed an error broached by some particular persons, but was far from being the generally received doctrine of that age. Can any one think it possible that so eminent a person in the church, both for piety and learning, could have condemned this doctrine as an error and a novelty, had it been the general doctrine of the Christian church, not only in that, but in all former ages: and no censure passed upon him for that which is now the great burning article in the church of Rome, and esteemed by them one of the greatest and most pernicious heresies?

Afterwards in the year 1059, when Berengarius in France and Germany had raised a fresh opposition against this doctrine, he was compelled to recant it by Pope Nicholas and the council at Rome, in these words,\* “That the bread and wine which are set upon the altar, after the consecration, are not only the sacrament, but the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and are sensibly, not only in the sacrament, but in truth, handled and broken by the hands of the priest, and

\* Gratian. de Consecrat. distinct. 2. Lanfranc. de corp. & sang. Domini, c. 5. Guil. mun. de Sacram. Algar. de Sacram. l. 1. c. 19.

ground or bruised by the teeth of the faithful." But it seems the Pope and his council were not then skilful enough to express themselves rightly in this matter; for the gloss upon the canon law says expressly,\* "That unless we understand these words of BERENGARIUS, (that is in truth of the Pope and his council) in a sound sense, we shall fall into a greater heresy than that of BERENGARIUS; for we do not make parts of the body of Christ." The meaning of which gloss I cannot imagine, unless it be this, That the body of Christ, though it be in truth *broken*, yet it is *not broken into parts*, (for we do not make parts of the body of Christ,) *but into wholes*. Now this new way of *breaking a body*, not into *parts*, but into *wholes*, (which in good earnest is the doctrine of the church of Rome) though to them that are able to believe transubstantiation, it may for any thing I know appear to be *sound sense*, yet to us that cannot believe so, it appears to be *solid nonsense*.

About twenty years after, in the year 1079, Pope Gregory the VII. began to be sensible of this absurdity; and therefore in another council at Rome, made Berengarius to recant in another form, viz:† "That the bread and wine which are placed upon the altar, are substantially changed into the true and proper and quickning flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and after consecration, are the true body of Christ, which was born of the virgin, and which being offered for the salvation of the world, did hang upon the cross, and sits at the right hand of the Father."

So that from the first starting of this doctrine in the second council of Nice, in the year 787, till the council under Pope Gregory the VII. in the year 1079, it was almost three hundred years that this doctrine was con-

\* Glos. Decret. de consecrat. dist. 2. in cap. Ego Berengarius.

† Waldens. To. 1. c. 13.

tested, and before this misshapen monster of transubstantiation could be licked into that form in which it is now settled and established in the church of Rome. Here then is a plain account of the first rise of this doctrine, and of the several steps whereby it was advanced by the church of Rome into an article of faith. I come now in the:

Third place, to answer the great pretended demonstration of "the impossibility that this doctrine, if it had been new, should ever have come in in any age, and been received in the church: and consequently it must of necessity have been the perpetual belief of the church in all ages." For if it had not always been the doctrine of the church, whenever it had attempted first to come in, there would have been a great stir and bustle about it, and the whole Christian world would have rose up in opposition to it. But we can shew no such time when it first came in, and when any such opposition was made to it, and therefore it was always the doctrine of the church. This demonstration, Monsieur Arnauld, a very learned man in France, pretends to be unanswerable: Whether it be so or not I shall briefly examine. And

First, we do assign a punctual and very likely time of the first rise of this doctrine, about the beginning of the ninth age; though it did not take firm root, nor was fully settled and established till towards the end of the eleventh. And this was the most likely time of all other, from the beginning of Christianity, for so gross an error to appear; it being, by the confession and consent of their own historians, the most dark and dismal time that ever happened to the Christian church, both for ignorance and superstition and vice. It came in together with idolatry, and was made use of to support it: a fit prop and companion for it. And indeed what tares might not the enemy have sown in so dark and long a

night, when so considerable a part of the Christian world was lulled asleep in profound ignorance and superstition? And this agrees very well with the account which our Saviour himself gives in the parable of the tares, of the springing up of errors and corruptions in the field of the church. While the men slept,\* the enemy did his work in the night, so that when they were awake they wondered how and whence the tares came; but being sure they were there, and that they were not sown at first, they concluded "the enemy had done it."

Secondly, I have shewn likewise that there was considerable opposition made to this error in its first coming in. The general ignorance and gross superstition of that age rendered the generality of people more quiet and secure, and disposed them to receive any thing that came under a pretence of mystery in religion, and of a greater reverence and devotion to the sacrament, and that seemed any way to countenance the worship of images, for which at that time they were zealously concerned. But notwithstanding the security and passive temper of the people, the men most eminent for piety and learning in that time made great resistance against it. I have already named Rabanus, Archbishop of Mentz, who opposed it as an error lately sprung up, and which had then gained but upon some few persons. To whom I may add Heribaldus, bishop of Auxerres, in France, Jo. Scotus, Erigena, and Ratramnus, commonly known by the name of Bertram, who at the same time were employed by the emperor Charles the Bald, to oppose this growing error, and wrote learnedly against it. And these were the eminent men for learning in that time. And because Monsieur Arnauld will not be satisfied unless there were some stir and bustle about it, Bertram, in his preface to his book tells us, that "they

\* Matt. xii. 24.

who according to their several opinions talked differently about the mystery of Christ's body and blood were divided by no small schism."

Thirdly, Though for a more clear and satisfactory answer to this pretended demonstration, I have been contented to untie this knot, yet I could without all these pains have cut it. For suppose this doctrine had silently come in and without opposition, so that we could not assign the particular time and occasion of its first rise; yet if it be evident from the records of former ages for above five hundred years together, that this was not the ancient belief of the church, and plain also, that this doctrine was afterwards received in the Roman church, though we could not tell how and when it came in, yet it would be the wildest and most extravagant thing in the world to set up a pretended demonstration of reason against plain experience and matter of fact. This is just Zeno's demonstration of the impossibility of motion against Diogenes walking before his eyes. For this is to undertake to prove that impossible to have been; which most certainly was. Just thus the servants in the parable might have demonstrated that the tares were wheat, because they were sure none but good seed was sown at first, and no man could give any account of the punctual time when any tares were sown, or by whom; and if an enemy had come to do it, he must needs have met with great resistance and opposition; but no such resistance was made, and therefore there could be no tares in the field, but that which they called tares was certainly good wheat. At the same rate, a man might demonstrate that our king, his majesty of Great Britian, is not returned into England, nor restored to his crown, because there being so great and powerful an army possessed of his lands, and therefore obliged by interest to keep him out, it was impossible he should



ever come in without a great deal of fighting and bloodshed; but there was no such thing, therefore he is not returned and restored to his crown. And by the like kind of demonstration one might prove that the Turk did not invade Christendom last year, and besiege Vienna; because if he had, the most Christian king, who had the greatest army in Christendom in a readiness, would certainly have employed it against him; but Monsieur Arnauld certainly knows that no such thing was done, and therefore according to his way of demonstration, the matter of fact, so commonly reported and believed, concerning the Turk's invasion of Christendom and besieging Vienna last year, was a perfect mistake. But a man may demonstrate till his head and heart ache, before he shall ever be able to prove that which certainly is, or was, never to have been. For of all sorts of impossibles, nothing is more evidently so, than to make that which hath been, not to have been. All the reason in the world is too weak to cope with so tough and obstinate a difficulty. And I have often wondered how a man of Monsieur Arnauld's great wit and sharp judgment could prevail with himself to engage in so bad and baffled a cause; or could think to defend it with so *wooden a dagger* as his *demonstration of reason* against certain *experience* and *matter of fact*; a thing, if it be possible, of equal absurdity with what he pretends to demonstrate, transubstantiation itself. I proceed to the

Third pretended ground of this doctrine of transubstantiation; and that is, *the infallible authority of the present church to make and declare new articles of faith*. And this in truth is the ground into which most of the learned men of their church did heretofore, and many do still resolve their belief of this doctrine: and, as I have already shewn, do plainly say that they see no sufficient reason, either from scripture or tradition. for

the belief of it: and that they should have believed the contrary had not the determination of the church obliged them otherwise.

But if this doctrine be obtruded upon the world merely by virtue of the authority of the Roman church, and the declaration of the council under Pope Gregory VII. or of the Lateran council under Innocent III. then it is a plain innovation in the Christian doctrine, and a new article of faith imposed upon the Christian world. And if any church hath this power, the Christian faith may be enlarged and changed as often as men please; and that which is no part of our Saviour's doctrine; nay, any thing, though never so absurd and unreasonable, may become an article of faith, obliging all Christians to the belief of it, whenever the church of Rome shall think fit to stamp her authority upon it, which would make Christianity a most uncertain and endless thing.

The fourth pretended ground of this doctrine is, *the necessity of such a change as this in the sacrament to the comfort and benefit of those who receive it.* But there is no colour for this if the thing be rightly considered: because the comfort and benefit of the sacrament depend upon the blessing annexed to the institution. And as water in baptism, without any substantial change made in that element, may by the divine blessing accompanying the institution be effectual to the washing away of sin, and spiritual regeneration; so there can no reason in the world be given why the elements of bread and wine in the Lord's supper may not, by the same divine blessing accompanying this institution, make the worthy receivers partakers of all the spiritual comfort and benefit designed to us thereby, without any substantial change made in those elements, since our Lord hath told us, that verily the flesh profiteth nothing. So that if we could do so odd and strange a thing as to eat the

very natural flesh and drink the blood of our Lord, I do not see of what greater advantage it would be to us than what we may have by partaking of the symbols of his body and blood as he hath appointed in remembrance of him. For the spiritual efficacy of the sacrament doth not depend upon the nature of the thing received, supposing we receive what our Lord appointed, and receive it with a right preparation and disposition of mind, but upon the supernatural blessing that goes along with it, and makes it effectual to those spiritual ends for which it was appointed.

The fifth and last pretended ground of this doctrine is, *to magnify the power of the priest in being able to work so great a miracle.* And this with great pride and pomp is often urged by them as a transcendent instance of the divine wisdom, to find out so admirable a way to raise the power and reverence of the priest; that he should be able every day, and as often as he pleases, by repeating a few words, to work so miraculous a change, and (as they love most absurdly and blasphemously to speak) *to make God himself.*

But this is to pretend to a power above that of God himself, for he did not, nor cannot make himself, nor do any thing that implies a contradiction, as transubstantiation evidently does in their pretending *to make God.* For to make that which already is, and make that *now* which *always* was, is not only vain and trifling if it could be done, but impossible because it implies a contradiction.

And what if after all, transubstantiation, if it were possible and actually wrought by the priest, would yet be no miracle; for there are two things necessary to a miracle, that there be a supernatural effect wrought, and that this effect be evident to sense. So that though a supernatural effect be wrought, yet if it be not evident

to sense, it is to all the ends and purposes of a miracle as if it were not; and can be no testimony or proof of any thing, because itself stands in need of another miracle to give testimony to it, and to prove that it was wrought. And neither in scripture, nor in profane authors, nor in common use of speech, is any thing called a miracle but what falls under the notice of our senses: a *miracle* being nothing else but a *supernatural effect evident to sense*, the great end and design whereof, is to be a sensible proof and conviction to us of something that we do not see.

And for want of this condition, transubstantiation, if it were true, would be no miracle. It would indeed be very *supernatural*, but for all that, it would not be a *sign* or *miracle*: for a sign or miracle is always a thing sensible, otherwise it could be no sign. Now that such a change as is pretended in transubstantiation, should really be wrought, and yet there should be no sign and appearance of it, is a thing very wonderful, but not to sense; for our senses perceive no change, the bread and wine in the sacrament to all our senses remaining just as they were before: and that a thing should remain to all appearance just as it was, hath nothing at all of wonder in it; we wonder indeed when we see a strange thing done, but no man wonders when he sees nothing done. So that transubstantiation, if they will needs have it a miracle, is such a miracle as any man may work that hath but the confidence to face men down that he works it, and the fortune to be believed; and though this church of Rome may magnify their priests upon account of this miracle, which they say they can work every day and every hour, yet I cannot understand the reason of it; for when this great work (as they call it) is done, there is nothing more appears to be done than if there were no miracle; now such a miracle as to all ap-

pearance, is no miracle, I see no reason why a Protestant minister, as well as Popish priest, may not work as often as he pleases; or if he can but have the patience to let it alone, it will work itself. For surely nothing in the world is easier than to let a thing be as it is, and by speaking a few words over it, to make it just what it was before. Every man, every day, may work ten thousand such miracles.

And thus I have dispatched the first part of my discourse, which was to consider the pretended grounds and reasons of the church of Rome for this doctrine, and to shew the weakness and insufficiency of them. I come in the

SECOND place, to produce our objections against it. Which will be of so much the greater force, because I have already shewn this doctrine to be destitute of all divine warrant and authority, and of any other sort of ground sufficient in reason to justify it. So that I do not now object against a doctrine which has a fair probability of divine revelation on its side, for that would weigh down all objections, which did not plainly overthrow the probability and credit of its divine revelation: but I object against a doctrine, by the mere will and tyranny of men imposed upon the belief of Christians, without any evidence of *Scripture*, and against all the evidence of *reason and sense*.

The objections I shall reduce to these two heads. First, The infinite scandal of this doctrine to the Christian religion. And secondly, the monstrous and insupportable absurdity of it.

First, *The infinite scandal of this doctrine to the Christian religion.* And that upon these four accounts: 1. Of the stupidity of this doctrine. 2. The real barbarousness of this sacrament and rite of our religion upon supposition of the truth of this doctrine. 3. Of the



cruel and bloody consequences of it. 4. Of the danger of idolatry; which they are certainly guilty of, if this doctrine be not true. 1. Upon account of the stupidity of this doctrine. I remember that Tully, who was a man of very good sense, instanceth in the conceit of eating God as the extremity of madness, and so stupid an apprehension as he thought no man was ever guilty of. "When we call," says he,\* "the fruits of the earth Ceres, and wine Bacchus, we use but the common language; but do you think any man so mad as to believe that which he eats to be God?" It seems he could not believe that so extravagant a folly had ever entered into the mind of man. It is a very severe saying of Averroes, the Arabian philosopher, (who lived after this doctrine was entertained among Christians,) and ought to make the church of Rome blush if she can; "I have travelled," says he,† "over the world, and have found divers sects; but so sottish a sect or law I never found, as is the sect of the Christians; because with their own teeth they devour their God whom they worship." It was great stupidity in the people of Israel to say, "Come let us make us gods;" but it was civilly said of them, "Let us make us gods *that may go before us*," in comparison of the church of Rome, who say, "Let us make a god that we *may eat him*." So that upon the whole matter I cannot but wonder that they should chuse thus to expose faith to the contempt of all that are endued with reason. And to speak the plain truth, the Christian religion was never so horribly exposed to the scorn of atheists and infidels, as it hath been by this most absurd and senseless doctrine. But thus it was foretold that‡ "the man of sin should come with power and signs and lying miracles, and with all

\* De Nat. Deorum, l. 3.

† Dionys. Carthus. in. 4. dist. 10. art. 1. ‡ 2 Thess. ii. 10.

deceivableness of unrighteousness," with all the *legerdemain* and *juggling tricks* of falsehood and imposture; amongst which this of transubstantiation, which *they* call a *miracle*, and *we* a *cheat*, is one of the chief: and in all probability those common juggling words of "*Hocus-pocus*," are nothing else but a corruption of "*Hoc est corpus*," by way of ridiculous imitation of the Priests of the church of Rome in their trick of transubstantiation. Into such contempt by this foolish doctrine and pretended miracle of theirs, have they brought the most sacred and venerable mystery of our religion.

2. It is very scandalous likewise upon account of the real *barbarousness* of this sacrament and rite of our religion, upon supposition of the truth of this doctrine. *Literally* to eat the flesh of the son of man and to drink his blood, St. Austin, as I have shewed before, declares to be a great *impiety*. And the impiety and barbarousness of the thing is not in truth extenuated, but only the appearance of it, by its being done under the species of bread and wine; for the thing they acknowledge is really done, and they believe that they verily eat and drink the natural flesh and blood of Christ. And what can any man do more unworthily towards his friend? How can he possibly use him more barbarously, than to feast upon his living flesh and blood? It is one of the greatest wonders in the world, that it should ever enter into the minds of men to put upon our Saviour's words, so easily capable of a more convenient sense, and so necessarily requiring it, a meaning so plainly contrary to reason and sense, and even to humanity itself. Had the ancient Christians owned any such doctrine, we should have heard it from the adversaries of our religion in every page of their writings; and they would have desired no greater advantage against the Christians, than to have been able to hit them in the teeth with their feasting

upon the natural flesh and blood of their Lord, and their God, and their best friend. What endless triumphs would they have made upon this subject? And with what confidence would they have set the cruelty used by Christians in their sacrament, against their God Saturn' eating his own children, and all the cruel and bloody rites of their idolatry? But that no such thing was then objected by the heathens to the Christians, is to a wise man instead of a thousand demonstrations that no such doctrine was then believed.

3. It is scandalous also upon account of the *cruel and bloody consequences* of this doctrine; so contrary to the plain laws of Christianity, and to one great end and design of this sacrament, which is to unite Christians in the most perfect love and charity to one another: whereas this doctrine hath been the occasion of the most barbarous and bloody tragedies that ever were acted in the world. For this hath been in the church of Rome the great burning article: and as absurd and unreasonable as it is, more Christians have been murdered for the denial of it than perhaps for all the other articles of their religion. And I think it may generally pass for a true observation, that all sects are commonly most hot and furious for those things for which there is least reason; for what men want of reason for their opinions, they usually supply and make up in rage. And it was no more than needed to use this severity upon this occasion; for nothing but the cruel fear of death could in probability, have driven so great a part of mankind into the acknowledgment of so unreasonable and senseless a doctrine.

O blessed Saviour! thou best friend and greatest lover of mankind, who can imagine thou didst ever intend that men should kill one another for not being able to believe contrary to their senses: for being unwilling to

think, that thou shouldst make one of the most horrid and barbarous things that can be imagined a main duty and principal mystery of thy religion; for not flattering the pride and presumption of the priest who says he can make God, and for not complying with the folly and stupidity of the people who are made to believe that they can eat him?

4. Upon account of the danger of *idolatry*; which they are certainly guilty of, if this doctrine be not true, and such a change as they pretend be not made in the sacrament; for if it be not, then they worship a creature instead of the Creator, God blessed for ever. But such a change I have shown to be impossible; or if it could be, yet they can never be certain that it is, and consequently are always in danger of idolatry: and that they can never be certain that such a change is made, is evident; because, according to the express determination of the Council of Trent, that depends upon the mind and *intention of the priest*, which cannot certainly be known but by revelation, which is not pretended in this case. And if they be mistaken in this change, through the knavery or crossness of the priest, who will not *make God* but when he thinks fit, they must not think to excuse themselves from idolatry because they intended to worship God and not a creature; for so the Persians might be excused from idolatry in worshipping the sun, because they intend to worship God and not a creature; and so indeed we may excuse all the idolatry that ever was in the world, which is nothing else but a mistake of the Deity, and upon that mistake, a worshipping of something as God which is not God.

Secondly. Besides the infinite scandal of this doctrine upon the accounts I have mentioned, *the monstrous absurdities* of it, make it insupportable to any religion. I am

very well assured of the grounds of religion in general, and of the Christian religion in particular; and yet I cannot see that the foundations of any revealed religion, are strong enough to bear the weight of so many and so great absurdities, as this doctrine of transubstantiation would load it withal. And to make this evident, I shall not insist upon those gross contradictions, of the same body being in so many several places at once; of our Saviour's giving away himself with his own hands to every one of his disciples, and yet still keeping himself to himself; and a thousand more of the like nature: but to show the absurdity of this doctrine, I shall only ask these few questions.

1. Whether any man have, or ever had, greater evidence of the truth of any divine revelation, than every man hath of the falsehood of transubstantiation? Infidelity were hardly possible to men, if all men had the same evidence for the Christian religion which they have against transubstantiation, that is, the clear and irresistible evidence of sense. He that can once be brought to contradict or deny his senses, is at an end of certainty; for what can a man be certain of, if he be not certain of what he sees? In some circumstances our senses may deceive us, but no faculty deceives us so little and so seldom: and when our senses do deceive us, even that error is not to be corrected without the help of our senses.

2. Supposing this doctrine had been delivered in scripture, in the very same words that it is decreed in the Council of Trent, by what clearer evidence or stronger argument could any man prove to me that such words were in the Bible, than I can prove to him that bread and wine, after consecration, are bread and wine still? He could but appeal to my eyes, to prove such words to be in the Bible, and with the same reason and justice,



might I appeal to several of his senses to prove to him, that the bread and wine, after consecration, are bread and wine still.

3. Whether it be reasonable to imagine, that God should make that a part of the Christian religion which shakes the main external evidence and confirmation of the whole? I mean the miracles which were wrought by our Saviour and his apostles, the assurance whereof did at first depend upon the certainty of sense. For if the senses of those who say they saw them were deceived, then there might be no miracles wrought; and consequently it may be justly doubted, whether that kind of confirmation which God hath given to the Christian religion would be strong enough to prove it, supposing transubstantiation to be a part of it: because every man hath as great evidence that transubstantiation is false, as he hath that the Christian religion is true. Suppose then transubstantiation to be a part of the Christian doctrine, it must have the same confirmation with the whole, and that is miracles: but of all doctrines in the world, it is peculiarly incapable of being proved by a miracle. For if a miracle were wrought for the proof it, the very same assurance which any man hath of the truth of the miracle, he hath of the falsehood of the doctrine, that is the clear evidence of his senses. For that there is a miracle wrought, to prove that what he sees in the sacrament *is not bread but the body of Christ*, there is only the evidence of sense; and there is the very same evidence to prove, that what he sees in the sacrament *is not the body of Christ but bread*. So that here would arise a new controversy, whether a man should rather believe his senses, giving testimony against the doctrine of transubstantiation, or bearing witness to a miracle wrought to confirm that doctrine; there being the very same evidence against the truth of the doctrine, which there is

for the truth of the miracle: and then the argument for transubstantiation, and the objection against it, would just balance one another; and consequently transubstantiation is not to be proved by a miracle, because that would be *to prove to a man by something that he sees, that he doth not see what he sees*. And if there were no other evidence that transubstantiation is no part of the Christian doctrine, this would be sufficient, that what proves the one, doth as much overthrow the other; and that miracles, which are certainly the best and highest external proof of Christianity, are the worst proof in the world of transubstantiation, unless a man can renounce his senses at the same time that he relies upon them. For a man cannot believe a miracle without relying upon sense, nor transubstantiation without renouncing it. So that never were any two things so ill coupled together, as the doctrine of Christianity and that of transubstantiation, because they draw several ways, and are ready to strangle one another: for the main evidence of the Christian doctrine, which is miracles, is resolved into the certainty of sense, but this evidence is clear and point blank against transubstantiation.

4. And, lastly, I would ask, what we are to think of the argument which our Saviour used to convince his disciples, after his resurrection, that his body was really risen, and that they were not deluded by a ghost or apparition? Is it a necessary and conclusive argument or not? “And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled; and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have.”\* But now, if we suppose with the church of Rome the doctrine of transubstantiation to be true, and that he had instructed his disciples in it just before his death, strange thoughts

\* Luke xxiv. 38, 39.

might justly have risen in their hearts, and they might have said to him: "Lord, it is but a few days ago since thou didst teach us not to believe our senses, but directly contrary to what we saw, viz. that the bread which thou gavest us in the sacrament, though we saw it, and handled it, and tasted it to be bread, yet was not bread, but thine own natural body; and now thou appealest to our senses to prove that this is thy body which we now see. If seeing and handling be an unquestionable evidence, that things are what they appear to our senses, then we were deceived before in the sacrament, and if they be not, then we are not sure now that this is thy body which we now see and handle, but it may be perhaps bread under the appearance of flesh and bones; just as in the sacrament, that which we saw and handled, and tasted to be bread, was thy flesh and bones, under the form and appearance of bread." Now, upon this supposition, it would have been a hard matter to have quieted the thoughts of his disciples: for if the argument which our Saviour used, did certainly prove to them, that what they saw and handled was his body, his very natural flesh and bones, because they saw and handled them, (which it were impious to deny,) it would as strongly prove, that what they saw and received before in the sacrament, was not the natural body and blood of Christ, but real bread and wine: and consequently, that according to our Saviour's arguing after his resurrection, they had no reason to believe transubstantiation before. For that very argument, by which our Saviour proves the reality of his body after his resurrection, doth as strongly prove the reality of bread and wine after consecration. But our Saviour's argument was most infallibly good and true, and, therefore, the doctrine of transubstantiation is undoubtedly false.

Upon the whole matter I shall only say this, that some

other points between us and the church of Rome, are managed by some kind of wit and subtlety, but this of transubstantiation is carried out by mere dint of impudence, and facing down of mankind.

And of this the more discerning persons of that church are of late grown so sensible, that they would now be glad to be rid of this odious and ridiculous doctrine. But the Council of Trent hath riveted it so fast into their religion, and made it to necessary and essential a point of their belief, that they cannot now part with it if they would; it is like a millstone hung about the neck of popery, it will sink it at the last.

And though some of their greatest wits, as Cardinal Perron, and of late, Monsieur Arnauld, have undertaken the defence of it in great volumes; yet it is an absurdity of that monstrous and massy weight, that no human authority or wit is able to support it. It will make the very pillars of St. Peter's crack, and requires more volumes to make it good than would fill the Vatican.

And now I would apply myself to the poor deluded people of that church, if they were either permitted by their priests, or durst venture without their leave, to look into their religion, and to examine the doctrines of it. Consider and show yourselves men. Do not suffer yourselves any longer to be led blindfolded, and by an implicit faith in your priests, into the belief of nonsense and contradiction. Think it enough, and too much, to let them rook you out of your money, for pretended pardons and counterfeit relics; but let not the authority of any priest or church, persuade you out of your senses. Credulity is certainly a fault as well as infidelity: and he who said, "*Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed;*" hath no where said, "*Blessed are they that have seen, and yet have not believed;*" much less, "*Blessed are they that believe directly contrary to what they see.*"

To conclude this discourse. By what hath been said upon this argument it will appear, with how little truth and reason, and regard to the interest of our common Christianity, it is so often said by our adversaries, that there are as good arguments for the belief of transubstantiation, as of the doctrine of the Trinity: when they themselves do acknowledge with us, that the doctrine of the Trinity is grounded upon the scriptures, and that according to the interpretation of them by the consent of the ancient fathers: but their doctrine of transubstantiation I have plainly shown to have no such ground, and that this is acknowledged by very many learned men of their own church. And this doctrine of theirs being first plainly proved by us to be destitute of all divine warrant and authority, our objections against it from the manifold contradictions of it to reason and sense, are so many demonstrations of the falsehood of it. Against all which they have nothing to put in the opposite scale but the infallibility of their Church, for which there is even less colour of proof from scripture than for transubstantiation itself. But so fond are they of their own innovations and errors, that rather than the dictates of their church, how groundless and absurd soever, should be called in question; rather than not have their will of us, in imposing upon us what they please, they will overthrow any article of the Christian faith, and shake the very foundations of our common religion: A clear evidence that the church of Rome is not the true mother, since she can be so well contented that Christianity should be destroyed, rather than the point in question should be decided against her.





## APPENDIX.

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### *Note A.*

ON page 103, we referred to the massacre in Paris, in the time of Gregory XIII. The following particulars of that horrid transaction, could not then be conveniently introduced, they are, therefore, here thrown in a note.

On the 24th of August, A. D. 1572, this storm burst upon the *Protestants*, the day of the massacre of Paris, which began a general slaughter of Protestants over the kingdom, in which the number taken off is computed at ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND. The horrors of that night are not to be conceived, much less expressed. The fatal signal being given by the tolling of the bell of St. Germain, the butchery began. Coligni, the Admiral of France, was murdered in his own house, his body thrown out of his window, and treated with the vilest indignities. The murderers ravaged the whole city of Paris, and butchered, in three days, above ten thousand lords, gentlemen, presidents, counsellors, advocates, lawyers, scholars, physicians, merchants, tradesmen, and others. Mothers, maidens, and children, were all involved in the destruction, and the gates and entrances of the king's palace all besmeared with their blood. And yet, as though this had been the most heroic transaction, and would shed immortal glory over the authors of it, medals were struck at Paris in honour of it, on the face of which was the French king sitting on a throne, with this inscription, "*Virtus in rebelles*," "Virtue against rebels;" and on the reverse, "*Pietas excitavit justitiam*," "Piety hath roused justice:" and when the news of this horrible masacre reached Rome, a jubilee was granted, and the

people were commanded to go every where to church, and bless God for the success of the action: and it was decreed that the pope should march with his cardinals to the church of St. Mark, and in the most solemn manner give God thanks for so great a blessing conferred on the See of Rome, and on the Christian world.\*

*Note B.*

On the same page we referred to the persecution which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. The following particulars are given in this place, for the reason above specified:—

The year 1685 will ever be remembered as a most fatal year to the Protestant religion. Louis XIV. had been for some years breaking the whole Protestant interest within his dominions. He was a king grossly ignorant in matters of religion, and bigoted in the extreme. Old Ruvigny, the deputy general of the churches, seeing the king bent on violent measures, told him he must beg a full hearing of him upon that subject; and he obtained one that lasted some hours. He told him what the state of France was during the wars in his father's reign; how happy France had been now for fifty years, occasioned chiefly by the quiet it was in with relation to the Protestants. He gave him an account of their numbers, their industry, and their wealth, their constant readiness to advance the revenue, and that all the quiet he had with the Court of Rome, was chiefly owing to them: if they were routed out, the Court of Rome would govern as absolutely in France, as it did in Spain. He desired leave to undeceive him, if he had been induced to believe that they would all change, as soon as he engaged his authority in the matter: many would go out of the kingdom, and carry their wealth and industry into

\* *Memoirs of Jane, Queen of Navarre*, p. 22.

other countries. In fine, he said, it would come to the shedding of much blood; many would suffer, and others would be precipitated into desperate courses; so that his reign would become a scene of blood and horror. The king, though he listened very attentively to these considerations, yet was not in the least impressed by them. He replied, that he considered himself so indispensably bound to endeavour the conversion of all his subjects, and the extirpation of heresy, that, if the doing it should require, that with one hand he should cut off the other, he would submit to that. After this, Ruvigny gave all his friends hints of what they were to look for.

“Mr. De Louvoy, seeing his master so set on the the matter,” says Bishop Burnet, “proposed to him a method, which he believed would shorten the work, and do it effectually: which was, to let loose some bodies of dragoons to live upon the Protestants on discretion. They were put under no restraint, but only to avoid rapes, and the killing them. This was begun in Bern. And the people were so struck with it, that seeing they were to be eat up first, and, if that prevailed not, to be cast into prison, when all was to be taken from them, till they should change; and, being required only to promise to reunite themselves to the church, they, overcome with fear, and having no time for consulting together, did universally comply. This did so animate the court, that upon it the same methods were taken in most places of Guienne, Languedoc, and Dauphine, where the greatest number of the Protestants were. A dismal consternation and feebleness ran through most of them, so that great numbers yielded. Upon which the king, now resolved to go through with what had been long projected, published an edict, [in October, 1685,] repealing the edict of Nantz, in which (though that edict was declared to be a perpetual and irrevocable law) he set forth, that it

was only intended to quiet matters by it, till more effectual ways should be taken for the conversion of heretics. He also promised in it, that, though all the public exercises of that religion were now suppressed, yet those of that persuasion who live quietly, should not be disturbed on that account, while, at the same time, not only the dragoons, but all the clergy, and the bigots of France, broke out into all the instances of rage and fury against such as did not change upon their being required in the king's name to be of his religion; for that was the style every where.

“Men and women of all ages, who would not yield, were not only stript of all they had, but kept long from sleep, driven about from place to place, and hunted out of their retirements. The women were carried into nunneries, in many of which they were almost starved, whipped, and barbarously treated. Some few of the bishops, and of the secular clergy, to make the matter easier to some, drew formularies importing that they were resolved to reunite themselves to the Catholic church, and that they renounced the errors of Luther and Calvin. People in such extremities are easy to put a stretched sense on any words that may give them present relief. So it was said, what harm was it to promise to be united to the Catholic church: and the renouncing those men's errors, did not renounce the good and sound doctrine. But it was very visible, with what intent those subscriptions or promises were asked of them: so their compliance in that matter was a plain equivocation. But, how weak and faulty soever they might be in this, it must be acknowledged, here was one of the most violent persecutions that is to be found in history. In many respects it exceeded them all, both in the several inventions of cruelty, and in its long continuance. I went over a great part of France while it was in its hottest rage, from Marseilles to Mont-



pelier, and from thence to Lyons, and so to Geneva. I saw and knew so many instances of their injustice and violence, that it exceeded even what could have been well imagined; for all men set their thoughts on work to invent new methods of cruelty. In all the towns through which I passed, I heard the most dismal accounts of things possible; but chiefly at Valence, where one D'Herapine seemed to exceed even the furies of inquisitors. One in the streets could have known the new converts, as they were passing by them, by a cloudy dejection that appeared in their looks and deportment. Such as endeavoured to make their escape, and were seized, (for guards and secret agents were spread along the whole roads and frontiers of France,) were, if men, condemned to the gallies, and, if women, to monasteries. To complete this cruelty, orders were given that such of the new converts, as did not at their death receive the sacrament, should be denied burial, and that their bodies should be left where other dead carcasses were cast out, to be devoured by wolves and dogs. This was executed in several places with the utmost barbarity; and it gave all people so much horror, that finding the ill effect of it, it was let fall. This hurt none, but struck all that saw it, even with more horror than those sufferings that were more felt. The fury that appeared on this occasion, did spread itself with a sort of contagion: for the intendants and other officers, that had been mild and gentle in the former parts of their life, seemed now to have laid aside the compassion of Christians, the breeding of gentlemen, and the common impressions of humanity. The greatest part of the clergy, the regulars especially, were so transported with the zeal that their king shewed on this occasion, that their sermons were full of the most inflamed eloquence that they

could invent, magnifying their king in strains too indecent and blasphemous to be mentioned by me.”\*

*Note C.*

On the same page we referred also to the persecution of the Waldenses.

Though all impartial historians bear testimony to the purity of life and manners of these people, yet they were aspersed by their enemies, the papists, with the vilest calumnies. But this was not all: they were charged with heresies. Mock conferences were held, by which it was pretended to give these unfortunate people an opportunity of defending their tenets. But the papal armies, by fire and faggot, soon decided all controversies. Raymond, Count of Toulouse, provoked by the extreme injustice of the papal domination, strongly protected his Waldensian subjects, and in all probability took the life of Peter de Chateauneuf, a monk, who was carrying on among that people the papal measures of cruelty and injustice. Innocent, who never intended to decide the controversy by argument, on occasion of the unhappy murder of the monk before mentioned, had despatched preachers throughout Europe, to collect all who were willing to revenge the innocent blood of Peter of Chateauneuf; promising Paradise to those who should bear arms for forty days, and bestowing on them the same indulgences as he did on those who undertook to conquer the Holy Land. “We moreover promise,” says he, in his bull, “to all those who shall take up arms to revenge the said murder, the pardon and remission of their sins. And since we are not to keep faith with those who do not keep it with God, we would have all to understand, that every person, who is bound to the said earl Raymond by oath of allegiance, or by any other way, is ab-

\* Bishop Burnet’s History of his own times, vol. iii. p. 58.

solved by apostolical authority from such obligations; and it is lawful for any Roman Catholic to persecute the said earl, and to seize upon his country," &c. "We exhort you, that you would endeavour to destroy the wicked heresy of the Albigenses,\* and do this with more rigor than you would use towards the Saracens themselves: persecute them with a strong hand: deprive them of their lands and possessions: banish them, and put Roman Catholics in their room." Such was the Pope's method of punishing a whole people for a single murder committed by Raymond.

As a consequence of this, *three hundred thousand* pilgrims, induced by the united motives of avarice and superstition, filled the country of the Albigenses with carnage and confusion for a number of years. The reader, who is not versed in history of this kind, can scarcely conceive the scenes of baseness, perfidy, barbarity, indecency, and hypocrisy, over which Innocent presided; and which were conducted partly by his legates, and partly by the infamous earl Simon of Montfort. But let it suffice to have said this in general: it is more to our purpose to observe the spirit of the people of God in these grievous tribulations. The castle of Menerbe on the frontiers of Spain, for want of water, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering to the Pope's legate. A certain abbot undertook to preach to those who were found in the castle, and to exhort them to acknowledge the Pope. But they interrupted his discourse, declaring that his labour was to no purpose. Earl Simon and the legate then caused a great fire to be kindled; and they burned a hundred and forty persons of both sexes.

\* The term Albigenses, or rather Albienses, was probably taken from the town of Albi; where the Waldenses flourished. They were called Albigenses, and in doctrine and manners, were not at all distinct from the Waldenses.

These martyrs died in triumph, praising God that he had counted them worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ. They opposed the legate to his face, and told Simon, that on the last day, when the books should be opened, he would meet with the just judgment of God for all his cruelties. Several monks entreated them to have pity on themselves, and promised them their lives if they would submit to the popedom. But the Christians "loved not their lives to the death:"\* only three women of the company recanted."

"A monk inquisitor, named Francis Borelli, in the year 1380, armed with a bull of Clement VII. undertook to persecute the godly Waldenses. In the space of thirteen years he delivered a hundred and fifty persons to the secular power, to be burned at Grenoble. In the valley of Fraissinere and the neighborhood, he apprehended eighty persons, who also were burned. The monkish inquisitors adjudged one moiety of the goods of the persons condemned to themselves, the rest to the temporal lords. What efforts may not be expected, when avarice, malice, and superstition unite in the same cause?"

"About the year 1400, the persecutors attacked the Waldenses of the valley of Pragela. The poor people seeing their caves possessed by their enemies, who assaulted them during the severity of the winter, retreated to one of the highest mountains of the Alps, the mothers carrying cradles, and leading by the hand those little children who were able to walk. Many of them were murdered, others were starved to death: a hundred and eighty children were found dead in their cradles, and the greatest part of their mothers died soon after them. But why should I relate all the particulars of such a scene of infernal barbarity?"

\* Rev. xii. 7.

In 1460, those of the valley of Fraissiniere were persecuted by a monk of the order of Friar Minors, or Franciscans, armed with the authority of the archbishop of Ambrun. And it appears from documents preserved till the time of Perrin, that every method which fraud and calumny could invent, was practised against them.

In the valley of Løyse, four hundred little children were found suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of their deceased mothers, in consequence of a great quantity of wood being placed at the entrance of the caves and set on fire. On the whole, above three thousand persons belonging to the valley were destroyed, and this righteous people were in that place exterminated.

The Calabrian Waldenses sent to Geneva in the year 1560, to request a supply of pastors. Two, namely, Stephen Negrin, and Lewis Paschal, were sent into Calabria, who endeavoured to establish the public exercise of Protestantism. Pope Pius IV. having notice of this, determined to extirpate a people who had presumed to plant Lutheranism,—so he called their religion,—so near to his seat. What follows of the history of this people is a distressful scene of persecution. Numbers of them being murdered by two companies of soldiers, headed by the Pope's agents, the rest craved mercy for themselves, their wives, and children, declaring, that if they were permitted to leave the country with a few conveniences, they would not return to it any more.

A certain youth, named Samson, defended himself a long time against those who came to apprehend him. But being wounded, he was at length taken and led to the top of a tower. Confess yourself to a priest here present, said the persecutors, before you be thrown down. I have already, says Samson, confessed myself to God. Throw him down from the tower, said the inquisitor. The next day the viceroy passing below near



the said tower, saw the poor man yet alive, with all his bones broken. He kicked him with his foot on the head, saying, is the dog yet alive? give him to the hogs to eat.

Stephen Negrin was starved to death in prison, and Lewis Paschal was conveyed to Rome, where he was burned alive in the presence of Pius IV. That tyrant feasted his eyes with the sight of the man in the flames, who had dared to call him anti-christ.

In the parliament of Aix, in the year 1540, one of the most inhuman edicts recorded in history, was pronounced against the Provençal Christians. It was ordered that the country of Merindol should be laid waste, and the woods cut down, to the compass of two hundred paces round. The name and authority of king Francis I. was obtained by surprise, and the revocation of the edict, which he afterwards sent to the parliament on better information, was suppressed by the persecutors. The murders, rapes, and desolations, were horrible beyond all description. In particular, a number of women were shut up in a barn full of straw, which was set on fire; and a soldier, moved with compassion, having opened a place for them, that they might escape, these helpless victims of papal rage were driven back into the flames by pikes and halberts. Other cruelties were practised on this occasion, so horrid, that they might seem to exceed belief, were not the authenticity of the accounts unquestionable.\*

*Note D.*

On page 180, in Tillotson's discourse on transubstantiation, reference is made to a fragment of Irenæus, preserved by Œcumenius. It may surprise the Protestant reader to learn that Dr. Trevern, Bishop of Strasbourg, and late Bishop of Aire, quotes this same fragment to

\* Milner's Church History, vol. iii. p. 341.

prove the *very opposite* of what it is quoted by Tillotson to prove, and his argument is to the following purport:

“From the very first, Christians were accused of celebrating a Thyestean banquet in their accursed mysteries. To elicit the truth, they were frequently and violently tortured. Invariably, however, they denied the charge. Now, if they had esteemed the elements in the Eucharist purely symbolical, why did they not give an explanation of the matter, which would at once have liberated them from torture? Yet, in no recorded instance, did they give any such exposition. Therefore they must consciously have held the doctrine of transubstantiation.”\*

In the first place I would observe that the Bishop of Strasbourg, by quoting this fragment to prove his own point, has sanctioned its authority, so that there can be no dispute with us as to that particular.

In the next place I remark, that Mr. Faber, in his “Difficulties of Romanism,” makes this same fragment of Irenæus the basis of an argument, which is as follows:

“Through a recorded misapprehension of the true nature of the Eucharist, the pagans fancied that the early Christians *literally* devoured human flesh and *literally* drank human blood. To procure a confession of this enormity, they applied the torture: but the Christians invariably *denied* the existence of any such abomination in their religious ceremonial. Now they could not *with truth* have *denied* its existence, if they had *held* the doctrine of transubstantiation; for, in *that* case, they must have been conscious, that, according to their full knowledge and belief, they were in the constant habit of *literally* devouring human flesh and of *literally* drinking human blood. Yet under the most severe torments,

\* Fab. Diff. Rom. p. 116.

they invariably and totally *denied* the fact. Therefore, by denying the fact, they of necessity denied also the doctrine of transubstantiation.”\*

“In the first place, the charge of eating *literal* human flesh and of drinking *literal* human blood in the celebration of the Eucharist was, as we have already found, constantly and explicitly *denied* by them: and, in the second place, it is difficult to conceive, under their circumstances, what possible benefit could have resulted from a formal explanation of their doctrine. They were tortured for the express purpose of forcing a confession, that, in the celebration of the Eucharist, they devoured *literal* human flesh and drank *literal* human blood. Now any such explanation, as the bishop would have us expect from them, would plainly amount to a denial of the charge; which *denial* they had *already* made in so many words: and it would be further attended only with the effect of making their persecutors view them in no better light than that of specious but dishonest equivocators. Where then would have been the utility of the required explanation? The sum and substance of the account, given by Irenæus, is this. On the evidence of their slaves, who had heard their masters say that the Eucharist was the body and blood of Christ, the Christians of Lyons were tortured in order to extort a confession, that they *literally* ate human flesh and *literally* drank human blood in the celebration of the eucharistic mysteries. Such, in form, was the charge brought against the Christians. But this charge, even upon the rack, they uniformly and constantly and firmly *denied*.”†

A further account of the matters spoken of in the fragment of Irenæus, is given in the epistle from the churches of Vienne and Lyons to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, as preserved by Eusebius. The same ac-

\* Fab. Diff. Rom. p. 117. † Ibid. 119.

*cusation* is made against the Christians; and the same explicit *denial* is given, not only by Sanctus and Blandina, but by ALL the faithful. According to the statement given in this epistle, Blandina was a Christian slave of a Christian mistress, while Sanctus was a deacon of the church of Vienne. The latter, therefore, as an ecclesiastic, must certainly have well known the real doctrine of the Eucharist. With these the epistle mentions Epagathus, a youthful believer, Maturis, a recently baptized mysta, Attalus, the very column and basis of the church, Byblis, a Christian woman, Ponticus, a boy of fifteen years, and the venerable bishop Pothinus, stooping under the burden of more than nine decades. Young and old, male and female, bond and free, ecclesiastic and laic, they all equally denied the participation of literal human flesh and literal human blood in the celebration of the Eucharist. Under such circumstances, by what imaginable possibility they could all have been transubstantialists, exceeds my powers of comprehension.\*†

*Note E.*

The following abstract of a letter of Mary, Queen of William III., in answer to one in favour of Popery from her father, then on the throne of Great Britain; as it is a good summary of the grounds of the Protestant faith, finds a very appropriate place at the close of the discussion in which we have just been engaged. She says in her letter, that “she was far from sticking to the religion in which she was bred out of a point of honour; for she had taken much pains to be settled in it upon better grounds. Those of the Church of England who had instructed her, had freely laid before her that which was

\* See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 1.

† Faber's Diff. Rom. p. 118.

good in the Romish religion, that so, seeing the good and the bad of both, she might judge impartially; according to the apostle's rule of *proving all things, and holding fast that which was good*. Though she had come young out of England, yet she had not left behind her either the desire of being well informed, or the means for it. She had furnished herself with books, and had those about her who might clear any doubts to her. She saw clearly in the scriptures, that she must work her own salvation with fear and trembling; and that she must not believe by the faith of another, but according as things appeared to herself. It ought to be no prejudice against the reformation, if many of those who professed it, led ill lives. If any of them lived ill, none of the principles of their religion allowed them in it. Many of them led good lives, and more might do it by the grace of God. But there were many devotions in the church of Rome, on which the reformed could set no value.

“She acknowledged, that, if there was an infallibility in the church, all other controversies must fall to the ground. But she could never yet be informed where that infallibility was lodged: whether in the pope alone, or in a general council, or in both. And she desired to know in whom the infallibility rested, when there were two or three popes at a time, acting one against another, with the assistance of councils, which they called general: and, at least, the succession was then much disordered. As for the authority that is pretended to have been given to St. Peter over the rest, that place which was chiefly alleged for it was otherwise interpreted by those of the church of England, as importing only the confirmation of him in the office of an apostle, when, in answer to that question, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* he had, by a triple confession, washed off his triple denial. The words that the king had cited were spoken to the



other apostles as well as to him. It was agreed by all, that the apostles were infallible, who were guided by God's Holy Spirit. But that gift, as well as many others, had ceased long ago. Yet, in that, St. Peter had no authority over the other apostles: otherwise St. Paul understood our Saviour's words ill, who *withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed*. And, if St. Peter himself could not maintain that authority, she could not see how it could be given to his successors, whose bad lives agreed ill with his doctrine.

“Nor did she see, why the ill use that some made of the scriptures ought to deprive others of them. It is true, all sects make use of them, and find somewhat in them that they draw in to support their opinions; yet, for all this, our Saviour said to the Jews, *search the scriptures*: and St. Paul ordered his epistles to be read to all the saints in the churches; and he says in one place, *I write as to wise men, judge what I say*. And if they might judge an apostle, much more any other teacher. Under the law of Moses, the Old Testament was to be read, not only in the hearing of the scribes, and the doctors of the law, but likewise in the hearing of the women and children. And, since God has made us reasonable creatures, it seemed necessary to employ our reasons chiefly in the matters of the greatest concern. Though faith was above our reason, yet it proposed nothing to us that was contradictory to it. Every one ought to satisfy himself in these things: as our Saviour convinced Thomas, by making him to thrust his own hand into the print of the nails, not leaving him to the testimony of the other apostles, who were already convinced.”

“Thus, she concluded, she gave him the trouble of a long account of the grounds upon which she was persuaded of the truth of her religion: in which she was so fully satisfied, that she trusted, by the grace of God,

that she should spend the rest of her days in it; and she was so well assured of the truth of our Saviour's words, that she was confident that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, but that he would be with it to the end of the world. All ended thus, that the religion which she professed, taught her her duty to him, so that she should ever be his most obedient daughter and servant."

Bishop Burnett, after giving the above abstract of Queen Mary's letter, observes, "I had a high opinion of the princess' good understanding, and of her knowledge in those matters, before I saw this letter; but this surprised me. It gave me an astonishing joy, to see so young a person, all of the sudden, without consulting any one person, to be able to write so solid and learned a letter, in which she mixed, with the respect that she paid a father, so great a firmness, that by it she cut off all further treaty. And her repulsing the attack, that the king made upon her, with so much resolution and force, did let the popish party see, that she understood her religion, as well as she loved it."\*

\* Bishop Burnet's History of his own time. Vol. iii. p. 152-156.









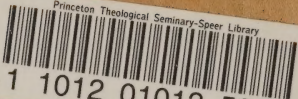
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